

Rod Serling's  
**THE TWILIGHT ZONE**  
NEW JOURNEYS OF THE IMAGINATION  
AND ALWAYS . . . THE UNEXPECTED  
Magazine

JUNE 1983 / \$2.50

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**STEPHEN  
KING  
THE  
RAFT**

A Novelette of  
Unrelenting Horror



**ANTHONY PERKINS  
ON PSYCHO II**



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CHEYENNE

**TWILIGHT ZONE MOVIE  
WICKED AND THE KEEP  
SELLER V.C. ANDREWS**

# Rod Serling's THE TWILIGHT ZONE Magazine

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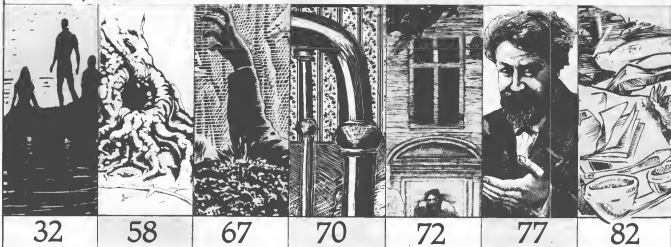
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# Cone fever . . .

*Psycho* is, as we all know, the movie that made millions of Americans afraid to take a shower (having been forced to hear this over and over for the past twenty years, Robert Bloch was finally driven to remark, "I'm just glad I didn't have my heroine killed while on the toilet!"), but the movie had, on me, a different effect: it gave me an almost superstitious awe of psychiatrists.

It wasn't the movie itself that got to me; I was unimpressed by that improbable Hollywood shrink who shows up at the end of the film just in time to tie up the loose plot threads. Rather, what caught my fancy was a real-life psychiatrist—a family friend we'll call Joan—who happened to come along when my parents and I first saw *Psycho* back in 1960, a few days after it opened. The shower scene had just ended, I recall; the amateur taxidermist, Norman Bates, was staring horror-struck at the carnage in the bathroom and moaning, "Oh, Mother!" And suddenly Joan clapped her hand to her head and exclaimed, in a voice loud enough for people in the next row to hear, "My God! He's killed his mother and he thinks he's her!"

We all greeted this crazy, off-the-wall comment with the derision it deserved; so, no doubt, did the people in the next row. And soon afterward Joan agreed that she must have been mistaken, since the voice of Norman's unseen mother was so clearly different from that of Anthony Perkins. (Recently I've heard reports that the mother's voice was, in fact, dubbed by someone else—which, if true, is rather a cheat.)

But of course, in the end, Joan turned out to be right. We were all extremely respectful. Later, when I congratulated her on her insight, she denied it was anything special. "Sheer luck," she said.

Readers will soon be able to test their own insight—or luck—by attempting to guess the ending of *Psycho II*. JAMES VERNIERE, who previews it on page 53, was kept unusually busy this time, interviewing Anthony Perkins and director Richard Franklin, as well as Michael Mann, who directed *The Keep*, and Aussie



Left to right: King, Curtis, Mayhar, Weiner

star Mel Gibson of *Road Warrior* fame. (Don't miss that one!) ED NAHA, who covers *Something Wicked* for us here, has also kept busy lately, with two more books just out: *The Suicide Plague*, an sf novel, and *Brilliance on a Budget*, an illustrated filmography of Roger Corman.

Sheer luck of the fateful kind seems to have played a role in the publication of STEPHEN KING's *The Raft*, though the result, for readers, is sheer horror. The original story dates back to the 1960s, to a day King spent lying on the beach, gazing at a wooden float out in the water and imagining—well, there's no sense giving things away. Suffice it to say that he conjured up a truly stomach-churning scene, one that ends with a class ring lying forlornly on the wooden boards.

King wrote it all down and tried it on an audience. "I remember reading the story at a coffee house," he says, "and having people almost throw up." Clearly it was a success. He entitled it "The Float" and sent it off to *Adam*, a men's magazine.

Months passed, then a whole year, and eventually the story was forgotten . . . until the day King found himself arrested. "I was driving on the highway and I ran over one of those rubber traffic cones," he explains. "It knocked my muffler loose." And so, being a man with a grievance, he did the natural thing: he proceeded to scoop up every cone he passed, gradually filling his car with them. (He says that at another time in his criminal career he'd amassed "sixty or seventy" such cones. As someone who, like King,

taught high school English in Maine during the 1960s and spent hours traveling its big empty highways, I can attest to the strange allure of those cones, and admit to grabbing one or two myself.) King was eventually picked up by the police, found guilty of petty larceny, and fined \$250—which, at that time, he didn't have. "I thought I'd be forced to sell the car," he recalls. But when he got home that day, his wife Tabitha greeted him with the news that a check had just arrived in the mail. It was from *Adam*, in payment for "The Float," and it came to exactly \$250. "So all I did was cash the check and pay the fine," he says.

There's an odd postscript to all this. *Adam*, King is sure, paid only on publication, not on acceptance; and yet he's equally sure that the story never actually came out—at least not that he's ever heard of. Instead, more than a decade later he reworked the piece, retitled it *The Raft*, and sold it to *Gallery*, TZ's—what should I call it?—sister magazine? Big brother? Daddy? At any rate, it appeared in *Gallery's* November '82 issue. We're reprinting it here on the assumption (based on demographic studies) that the two audiences don't overlap very much, and in the certainty that the story is more suited to our own readership. Be warned, though: Rod Serling would never have touched it for *The Twilight Zone*. It's far too savage for the tube.

That's why, for balance, I've stocked this issue with tales that are light, whimsical, or at least reasonably serene. A roster of our authors: ROBERT H. CURTIS, a

# THE TWILIGHT ZONE MAGAZINE

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Rod Serling's The Twilight Zone Magazine, 1983, Volume 3, Number 2, is published bimonthly in the United States and simultaneously in Canada by TZ Publications, Inc., 800 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017, Telephone (212) 986-0600. Copyright © 1983 by TZ Publications, Inc. Rod Serling's The Twilight Zone Magazine is published pursuant to a license from Carolyn Serling and Viacom Enterprises, a division of Viacom International, Inc. All rights reserved. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Responsibility is not assumed for unsolicited materials. Return postage must accompany all unsolicited material if return is requested. All rights reserved on material accepted for publication unless otherwise specified. Advertisers: send ads to Rod Serling's The Twilight Zone Magazine or to its editors are assumed intended for publication. Nothing may be reproduced in whole or in part without written permission from the publishers. Any similarity between persons appearing in fiction and real persons living or dead is coincidental. Single copies \$2.50 in U.S. \$3 in Canada. Subscriptions: U.S., U.S. possessions, Canada, and APO—one year, 6 issues \$15 (\$18 in Canadian currency). Postmaster: Send address changes to P.O. Box 252, Mt. Morris, IL 61054. Printed in U.S.A.

Left to right: Haiblum, Wagner, Disch, Hadji

former physician, now lectures at Stanford University's School of Medicine and has five popular medical books behind him, plus a string of mystery and science fiction stories. JOE R. LANSDALE, that prolific Texan, is making his fifth TZ appearance. Having psychoanalyzed Frankenstein's monster in our Jan./Feb. issue, he's now back with an even crazier couch case. CHRIS MASSIE, who died in 1964 at age eighty-five, was a British novelist best known for *Hallelujah Chorus* (published here as *The Falcon Road*) and *Corridor of Mirrors*, filmed in the 1940s. His *A Fragment of Fact*, a tale both inexplicable (in the Robert Aickman manner) and charming, appeared in a Faber & Faber collection in England and has been reprinted there, but this is the first time, to my knowledge, that it's appeared in the U.S. ARDATH MAYHAR, a widely published fantasist, is a youthful grandmother who raises cattle, goats, and rabbits down in Chireno, Texas. Among her most recent projects: continuing the "Fuzzy" series (using characters created by the late H. Beam Piper) in *Golden Dream* from Ace. CURTIS K. STADTFELD teaches English at Eastern Michigan University and runs the *Clinton Local*, a weekly newspaper. His stories have appeared in *Yankee*, *Ms.*, and *Family Circle*. ANDREW WEINER, a London-born freelance journalist now living in Toronto, has written for magazines from *Reader's Digest* to *New Musical Express* and on subjects ranging from rock to high finance. LORENZO CARCATERRA, who conducted the interview with V.C. Andrews, is a

former New York *Daily News* reporter. He recently moved to Time Inc.'s new magazine, *TV-Cable Week*.

With this issue we're beginning a three-part series by ISIDORE HAIBLUM in which the author of such sf novels as *The Return*, *Interworld*, *Nightmare Express*, and *The Tsaddik of the Seven Wonders*—some hard-boiled, some slapstick, each lively as all get-out—casts a jaundiced (but still determinedly twinkling) eye on his own career and tells you how to follow in his footsteps... if you dare.

Finally come our list-makers, three of the best-read people I know. There's our book columnist, THOMAS M. DISCH, hailed by a British reviewer as "the finest intellect in science fiction today." Most recent collections: *The Man Who Had No Idea* (stories) and *Burn This* (poems). There's psychiatrist-turned-fantasist KARL EDWARD WAGNER, creator—whether in his own Kane series or in his continuation of Robert E. Howard's Conan—of the most intelligent sword and sorcery you'll find today. (He's also a give-'em-their-money's-worth fantasy publisher and the editor of *DAW's Year's Best Horror* stories.) Finally, there's R.S. HADJI, totally *sui generis*, who describes himself as merely "an avid reader and collector of supernatural literature" and insists he leads "a rather ordinary existence in Toronto," but who has, in fact, a mind like the card catalogue of a well-stocked library of the weird. He's read everything and remembers every word; would that we all could do likewise.

—TK



# Books

by

## Thomas M. Disch

There has been increasingly louder lamentation in the publishing industry during the last few years over the fate of what is euphemistically called mid-list fiction, by which is meant novels not likely to become bestsellers. Most fiction of any quality nowadays falls into this mid-list category, as witness the now virtually total disparity between the books the *New York Times Book Review* commends to our attention and those that fill its hardcover and paperback bestseller lists. The most dire consequence of this schism is that paperback houses are simply refusing to reprint mid-list titles, even when a majority of reviewers has written rave reviews. This attitude was pithily expressed at a recent PEN symposium by Robert Wyatt, then chief editor of Avon Books: "You should know that in the paperback business, quotes don't mean diddly-shit."

The industry, Wyatt maintains, is interested in reprinting only two kinds of books, bestsellers and category books. "By a category book," Wyatt said, "I mean something lower . . . The wholesaler says, 'Give me your Westerns. Give me your science fiction . . . He really would rather have the series number than the title or the author.'" (Wyatt's quotes are taken from a transcript of the Publishing Industry Symposium published in *PEN Newsletter*. This transcript is reprinted in the current issue of *The Patchin Review* [\$2.00 at most sf book stores], together with comments and reactions from various sf writers.)

The more sensitive sf writers and readers may take umbrage at having

the genre summed up as "something lower," but there is a dollop of cold comfort in still being considered publishable. However, the same tiered structure of bestseller/mid-list/Something Lower exists within the field of sf, where it is producing the same squeeze on mid-list titles.

Consider the sf titles now on the *Times* list. There is *The E.T. Storybook*, titles by Clarke and Asimov (having reviewed them elsewhere, I won't rehash my dissatisfaction with *Foundation's Edge* and *2010* except to say I found the plots of both books numbingly predictable and the wattage of the prose varying between 60 and 15), a prehistoric bodice-ripper, and a new potpourri of toothless whimsies by Douglas Adams. A sorry lot, but no sorrier, in literary terms, than the rest of the list, which this week (Jan. 9, 1983) contained not a single title remotely conceivable as a candidate for the major literary awards.

Meanwhile, in the realm of Something Lower, where books are but numbers in a series, the hacks grind out and the presses print the sf equivalent of Silhouette Romances. The sheer mass of Perry Rhodan lookalikes and fantasy-gaming disguised as books is awesome in much the same way that Niagara Falls is awesome: there is so much of it and it never stops. The metaphor needn't stop there: it is, similarly, not very potable, and most of it courses through the paperback racks without ever being reviewed. Why should it be, after all? Are sneakers or soft drinks or matchbooks reviewed? Commodities are made to be

consumed, and surely it is an unkindness for those favored by fortune with steak in plenty to be disdainful of the "taste" of people who must make do with Hamburger Helper.

Surely: except that we live in a world where steak, in the literary sense, is being phased out of existence. The same megatrends that are endangering mid-list titles in fiction at large (conglomerate takeovers, accountants in the saddle, declining reading skills among the young, and a tacit understanding among those in charge of the economy that an educated consumer is bad for business) aren't likely to exempt the sf mid-list from the same promised extinction. Or, in the concluding words of that sad captain of the publishing industry, Robert Wyatt, the prospect for writers of mid-list novels is "extremely depressing." It is a comfort to see tears glisten even in the eye of one's executioner.

All this preamble by way of celebrating three new novels, each of which is a work of enough distinction to merit a column by itself. Each is written with an ardor, flair, and demand upon readerly intelligence that would seem to destine it to a mid-list existence, and, that demand being met, each is a joy to read.

Book by book, that's saying a lot, but stacked up all three together, it seems reason to rebel against the gloomiest doomsday forebodings of the PEN symposiasts. Which is not to say that Hamburger Helper shall disappear from the American diet and we shall all eat steak in the great by-and-by. Only that a preference for steak is innate in human nature, and while there are people with strong teeth and sound digestions there will be butcher shops. Or (as that may offend vegetarian readers): gather ye rosebuds while ye may.

At the present moment the most reliable butcher shop (or florist), science fictionally speaking, is Timescape Books, which has published two of the three books under consideration—Gene Wolfe's *The Citadel of the Autarch* (\$15.95) and Norman Spinrad's *The Void Captain's Tale* (\$13.95).

*Citadel* is the fourth (though not quite conclusive) volume in Wolfe's



tetralogy, *The Book of the New Sun*, whose popular success has confounded all conventional wisdom, both the Industry's and my own. *The Shadow of the Torturer* won a World Fantasy Award, *The Claw of the Conciliator* a Nebula, and last year's *The Sword of the Lictor* is the likeliest mammalian contender in a field liable to be dominated by four dinosaurs—Clarke, Asimov, Heinlein, and Hubbard. Now we have *Citadel*, and it is possible to take a deep breath and try, if not to achieve closure, at least to figure out what really happens and what it all means.

For rarely has there been a work of genre fiction in which the import of the story is so elusive, to say nothing of the bare facts. Such was its appeal to the literary detective in me that halfway through this last volume I could resist no longer and phoned up my old friend and fellow Wolfe-enthusiast, John Clute, to suggest that we not wait the dozen or so years that even a masterpiece is supposed to age in the cask but set about at once to edit a volume of interpretive essays, supplemented with a glossary and other suitable rites of scholarship. John said, "Good idea," and immediately began to jot down some questions that remained moot after his first reading of the four volumes, but still seemed answerable. As a sample of the fascination of *The Book of the New Sun*, I can't resist quoting (with his permission) from John's list of conundrums:

"—Who is the woman lying bleeding beneath the Matachine Tower whom Severian almost forgets?

"—Just how is an Autarch actually chosen? And who is Paeon?

"—Are all the khaibits in the novel identified as such? And just how do exultants prolong their lives?

"—Is Cyriaca S's mother?" (After more reflection, John concluded that Cyriaca was not Severian's mother, and he developed an ingenious theory of who, amazingly, his mother might be, which I'm sworn not to hint at here, as John's entitled to dibs for his discovery.)

Do you begin to sense what very odd books these must be that they can leave such questions in the air and still generate such applause and loyalty? Of the four volumes *Citadel* is surely the oddest, for it is almost perversely anticlimactic in its denial of those pleasures usually associated with finishing a long epic narrative; there are no confrontation scenes between Severian and the many major characters from the earlier volumes (no accounting, indeed, for many of them), no poetic justice for the villains, no coronal ceremonies for the triumphant hero. The last eight chapters, which show Severian as Autarch, are one long dying fall, as though no music would suit the rites of passage to ethical maturity (for this is what the allegory is allegorizing; that much at least is clear) save the muffled drumbeats of a funeral march.

I realize this is not the stuff that blurb-writers' dreams are made of, but most sf readers by now will already have begun to read *The Book of the New Sun* and will know their own taste in the matter. Nor can I imagine that any reader of the first three volumes could be prevented from continuing to the end. At this moment the whole tetralogy seems simply too large for ordinary critical epithets to apply; one might as well scrawl "pretty damned big!" on the Great Pyramid.

Temperamentally not two authors could be more unlike than Gene Wolfe and Norman Spinrad, and few novels could be more disparate in their achievement than *The Book of the New Sun* and *The Void Captain's Tale*. Wolfe is decorous, devious, sacerdotal; one suspects that, like T. S. Eliot, he is an Anglican in his



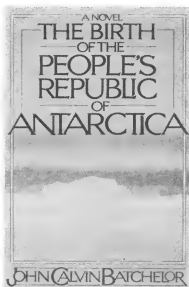
religion, a monarchist in his politics. Spinrad is brash, forthright, profane; his intellectual allegiances hark back not centuries but a mere twenty-five years to the late fifties, when Spinrad's namesake and role-model, Norman Mailer, was in flower.

Mailer's chief significance to writers of my own and Norman's generation can be bounded in the nutshell of two powerful stories from *Advertisements for Myself* (1959), "The Man Who Studied Yoga" and "The Time of Her Time." In those stories Mailer found a new way to turn to account the sexual explicitness that recent court decisions had made possible for American writers. Prior to Mailer, writing about sex tended to fall into two categories—the steamy (a tradition carried on in our time by Judith Krantz, Harold Robbins, et al) and the risqué, a category broad enough to subsume centuries of bawdry from Rabelais to the joke pages of *Playboy*. Both modes tend to trivialize sex and deny its sometime sublimity. Mailer found a language that was street-wise without being loutish, eloquent without gushing, a language more true to sexual experience than any of his contemporaries.

Norman Spinrad was the first sf writer to apply the lessons of Mailer to the material of science fiction, and he was rewarded for his achievement by having the book in which he did this, *Bug Jack Barron* (1969), banned from England's largest bookstore chain

and denounced in the House of Commons. Spinrad has written seven novels since then, only one of which departs markedly from a Mailerian rhetoric. The lone exception is the delightfully bonkers *The Iron Dream* (1972), which purports to be an sf pulp adventure penned by Adolf Hitler. In the other novels (excepting the latest), Spinrad was up against the same problem that so often baffled Mailer in his later fiction: the voice he'd crafted for his breakthrough work did not always suit later occasions. *A World Between* (1979), an effort to confront the issues raised by feminism, seemed to me as tendentious and off-target as Mailer's *The Prisoner of Sex*, while *Songs from the Stars* (1980) created a post-Apocalyptic utopia from (laid-)back-issues of the *Whole Earth Catalogue* that shared the problem of most utopias: blandness. *The Void* and *Captain's Tale* represents a new synthesis of Spinrad's main strengths. The earnestness of the metasexual theorizer is qualified by the irony and livened by the playfulness that has characterized *The Iron Dream* and his best short fiction.

The central premise could not be simpler: interstellar flight by means of electronically amplified orgasm. Only female orgasm, however, acts as propellant; the male role is the honorific one of pressing the takeoff button—and therein lies *The Void* and *Captain's Tale*. The *reductio ad absurdum* of the old metaphor/equation, Orgasm=Grail, is elaborated in great extrapolative detail, but the central sexual drama would soon come to seem an absurdity plain and simple if Spinrad had not cast his tale into an evolved lingo of his own invention, a kind of Berlitz for Space Travelers that generates an atmosphere of constant, ever-shifting unnaturalness. It is a language as capable of flights of eloquence as of pratfalls of pomposity. The effect of reading much of it, as with the neo-English of *A Clockwork Orange* or *Riddley Walker*, is that as we learn the language we enter the culture of the book, becoming, in effect, its naturalized citizens. The comparison to Burgess's and Walker's books can be misleading in one way, however, for the effect of the Spinradical *sprach* is not so much to make commonplace



speech richer, stranger, and more poetic, but to signify the artifice of all social conventions, to be symptomatic of the central thesis of the book—that the sexual grail is something that words, in their nature, cannot express.

*The Birth of the People's Republic of Antarctica* by John Calvin Batchelor (Dial, \$16.95) is not published as a science fiction novel, but as a "novel of the imminent future." Usually I would argue that any story set in the future is by its nature science fiction, but Batchelor's muse harks back to far older traditions, as far back, indeed, as *Beowulf*, though *Moby Dick* is probably a more apt formal comparison. There is the same potent mix of epic adventure and lofty speculation acted out by larger-than-life figures against a background of global dimensions—in this case, a near future crisis that has filled the oceans of the world with a multinational diaspora of supremely wretched men and women. (That's a quote from the book jacket, but I don't think it's cheating to repeat it, since it was a quote I wrote.) The book chronicles a Swedish prison break led by the hero's Ahab-large grandfather; a voyage ever-Southwards through an Atlantic as dismal as the oceans of Poe's *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*; then, with uncanny prescience (for this was written and contracted before the actual British-Argentine war), Batchelor depicts a war in the

Falkland Islands, which leads to the book's awesome conclusion in the "ice camps" of Antarctica. Here is a sample of the author's summing-up of the situation in Chapter the Last:

The wretched in the South, we wretches, we were not all innocent victims of some fabulous conspiracy to disenfranchise lombs. . . . We . . . were the worst possible remnant. The genuine meek, the genuinely wronged, they had been left far behind, dead in their hovels, on the beaches, in the sea. We in the ice camps had come through our ordeals because we were tougher, wilder, crueler than our brethren. We were the lucky remnant. We were the most vicious wretched: pirotes, killers, thieves, madmen, lost to reason and utterly embittered. As we suffered atrocities, we were atrocious. . . . We did drink the blood. We did eat the dead.

Batchelor manages to make good on his promise of the highest and widest drama precisely because he keeps a certain distance from his cast of high-voltage characters and handles their passions, crimes, and ordeals with electrician's gloves. He anatomizes them, as a historian might, rather than presenting them always in cinematically detailed scenes. The danger with this technique is that a certain chill may set in (though it's scarcely a danger in this book) or that the prose may be infected with the language of contemporary psychology, a sorry fate for any novel. Again, that danger never threatens, since Batchelor took his degree at Union Theological Seminary, and the language he uses in his anatomies of the soul is as timeless as the King James Bible's or Dr. Johnson's.

So there you have it—the bulwark I'd propose against the demise that's threatened to the mid-list novel—to, that is, novels that take risks and enhance rather than insult the intelligence. As unlike each other, one by one, as most commodity-novels are alike. While there are writers to write such books, it is the publishers who deliberately publish and promote drek who should find their lot, in Wyatt's words, "extremely depressing," for they must endure the Dantean punishment of living in the stench of the product they produce. 17



**Videodrome**  
(Universal)  
Written and directed  
by David Cronenberg

**The Dark Crystal**  
(Universal)  
Directed by Jim Henson and Frank Oz  
Screenplay by David Odell

Time was when the expert filmmakers in the fantasy field leaned heavily on *suggestion* for getting the best effects. Don't show your marvel too clearly—that was their philosophy. Take your time with the build-up. Bring it into sight as late as possible, revealing it only after the audience has been thoroughly prepared for the wonder they're about to see, only after they've been emotionally softened by as many psychological tricks as can tastefully be brought to bear. And even then, even after all that, don't show your horrible creature or astonishing machine too clearly. Shoot it in a dim light. Let the audience see only parts of it from confusing angles and, if at all possible, give them only the briefest glimpses of your incredible whatsits.

Boris Karloff, dear old Boris Karloff, said it all in a phrase when Christopher Lee expressed nervous doubt to him about his own ability to demonstrate the full awfulness of some terrible being he was trying to create for the ticket-buyers. Smiling kindly, if in a subtly sinister manner, Karloff laid a thin, vaguely clawlike

It is not our fault that we have become thus. It is clearly the fault of the moviemakers. It is *they* who have turned off our willingness to imagine freely, *they* who have reduced our ability to expand and develop from mere hints. They have converted us all into a troupe of viewers who must have absolutely everything spelled out before we can believe, or even understand, what the producers of the film are asking us to believe. They did it step by step, showing us more and more. The sexual movies, which once had panned demurely away from the loving leads just as they began to breathe heavily, now feature *de rigueur* shots of bare-ass humping, without which even *Little Women* hand on Lee's shoulder and gently whispered: "Never worry on that score, dear boy. The audience will do it for you."

But that was Time Was. Time is that we are no longer a nation of dreamy, creative moviegoers, willing and able to take the tiny peek Val Lewton gave us of Simone Simon turning dorkish and to skillfully convert it, inside our heads, into the full transformation of a Serbian beauty into one of the Cat People. Nor, today, will we accept without question, just in the spirit of the thing, a Fourth-of-July-sparkler-driven interstellar rocket. We have become a different sort of crew altogether. No longer do we approach the movie theater with a sense of poetic participation, eager to share in the creative act. Now we are stern literalists who must be *shown* our marvels and horrors, *clearly* and in great detail.

# Screen

by Gahan Wilson

would today be incomplete. So, too, the purveyors of filmic ogres and angels have gone steadily and determinedly from soft-focused, dimly lit evocations, to gentlemen and ladies in increasingly elaborate and detailed makeup, and on to a science of special effects which will go to any length of effort, ingenuity, and expense in order to show us absolutely *everything* about absolutely anything the fevered script describes.

Two films have recently arrived which were obviously designed to illustrate the above thesis from cleverly divergent angles. The first is David Cronenberg's *Videodrome*, the second Jim Henson and Frank Oz's *The Dark Crystal*.

*Videodrome* is the strongest statement I have seen yet of Cronenberg's disgust with biological processes and his deep fascination with the purity of technology. I think what he is doing, certainly in *Scanners* and in this film, is opting for a kind of electronic evolution which will, he hopes, eliminate the *homo sapiens*, a bunch he views with less than affection, and replace them with something which functions without glands or having to go to the toilet.

However, I think he is somewhat confused about all this, and somewhat unsure. From all reports he is a loving family man, has many loyal friends, and is generally—for a movie director, at least—a perfectly fine fellow; and all this comes through as a kind of ambivalence.

*Videodrome*, for instance, seems decidedly pro-human at first, even





"... wondering why his television set has developed varicose veins and a severe bulging of the tube." Victim of an advanced form of mind control, Videodrome's small-time cable tv producer (played by James Woods) suffers a series of erotic—and increasingly violent—hallucinations.

though it rather disapproves of their goings-on. Its stance is one of alarm at the sinister threat to mankind posed by the purveyors of violent tv "entertainment." What is this constant exposure to increasingly brutal forms of amusement doing to us, anyway?

Cronenberg shakes his head and we shake ours with him as we watch his antihero, a tv producer played by James Woods, discover and gloat over a mysterious underground tv show called "Videodrome," which is being broadcast not over the channels we know, but between them. The producer becomes more and more convinced that this torture and snuff show—for that is what "Videodrome" is—is just what the television public, too jaded to be intrigued even by Roman orgies, would take to their hearts. Girls being whipped to death, slow garrotings, a plethora of nasty and convincing mutilations—what more could the home viewer ask for?

Soon our antihero has become completely addicted to "Videodrome." Can't do without it. Must watch his pirated tapes of it every night. But, friends, his pleasure is not without its drawbacks, for watching the program has two really deleterious effects on the man: (1) It makes him confused about reality, to the extent of wondering why his television set has developed varicose veins and a severe bulging of the tube. (2) It turns him into a human VCR, a videocassette recorder.

Now as stated in our thesis, none of this is suggested or hinted at. It is shown, ingeniously, in graphic detail, and with numerous elaborations and increasingly awful variations as the

movie progresses, and our tv producer suffers ever more dire symptoms from his now near-total dependence on his favorite show. Try and imagine, for example, what would happen if, right now, in the comfort of your armchair, your solar plexus conveniently opened up and you were able to slip your arm into your bowels up to your elbow. What would your hand look like when it emerged? Covered with slimy gick? Sure. Dripping goo? Of course. But really, what's the point of imagining? Face it, the movie does much better than you possibly could.

Of course, by now we are all shaking our heads like sixty, we and Cronenberg. What awful stuff all this tv watching has done to our antihero!

Soon the fellow is enjoying phone conversations with the tv image of his latest conquest (Deborah Harry), a "Dr. Ruth"-type sex advisor with an unexplained streak of masochism. Later his belly develops a weird vagina-like opening into which his oppressors shove videocassettes.



And how cynical everyone who works in the industry must be. And what about this decadent genius—a character called "Professor Brian O'Blivion," reportedly inspired by Marshall McLuhan—who honestly believes, among other patently immoral things, that appearing on tv talk shows is the same as being alive, if not better? What are we to make of all these awful influences? Land sakes, if we know what's good for us we'll unplug all our sets and give them to the Salvation Army for tax credit.

But wait—what's this

Cronenberg's saying toward the end of the movie? Why do we find our heads shaking slower and slower? Is it possible we are to approve of Professor O'Blivion after all? That he may be, like McLuhan, something of a smartass, but that he really is, deep down inside, a sweetie with a heart of gold and that he's doing all these disturbing things for our own good? Yes, unless I have misviewed Videodrome badly: Cronenberg does want us to believe just that.

Well, okay, I can go along with it. Not agree with it, perhaps, but accept it without difficulty as a sort of tricky propaganda device. God knows, propaganda's a grand, traditional use of the medium. Often the message is the medium. And though I suspect that this final flip in the message may be technically weak, it is an interesting experiment. No problem.



"... part Navajo and part old bloodhound." One of the tribe of Mystics in *The Dark Crystal*, who move slowly, mutter prophetic things, and appear to have something rather like *The Force* on their side.

The thing I cannot forgive *Videodrome* for is yet another flip at its end, a much more serious one, and one so structurally incongruous that it really is inexcusable.

The whole movie, as stated above, is mercilessly explicit, almost tediously insistent that you see everything no matter how repulsive it may be or how technically difficult it may be to deliver. Okay, again. Well and good. A perfectly acceptable approach to filmmaking. But at the end of *Videodrome* we are led up to a wonder, a marvel, the end result of the movie's entire preoccupation, and, to our amazement, we don't see what happens! When the final kicker, the visual event of visual events arrives, Cronenberg's camera suddenly turns demure, blushing shy. It averts its lens; it even turns itself off. After programming us to confidently expect a clear, unblinking stare at all events, we are suddenly protected from having so much as a glimpse of the movie's ultimate horror. Not a peek. Not a hint. Only blackness and *The End*.

That's not playing fair, Dave.

The *Dark Crystal* is another kind of experiment in total exposure, but whereas *Videodrome* wishes us to experience gory nightmares without any shield, *Crystal* wants us to view, directly and in clear focus, nothing less than Fairyland.

It is, to say the least, a daring and bold idea. Fairyland is a very private place for all of us. Any attempt to depict it risks becoming a resented invasion, and a muffed attempt to do so can result in a really spectacular failure.

The *Dark Crystal*'s Fairyland invasion army is composed of some of the best troops that could be mustered. Brian Froud, the English illustrator, is the star creative general, making all the basic maps and

providing the essential intelligence; Jim Henson and Frank Oz (of Muppet fame) directed the action, and the supply lines were established and protected by producer Gary Kurtz, a seasoned veteran of *Star Wars* and other spectacularly successful forays. The troops following them are legion; the listing of them—the battalions of special effects experts, costume designers, creators of sets and lighting and God knows what—goes on and on forever, making even the credit roll call for E.T. seem tiny.

So how did it go? How successful was the landing? Did they take the high ground? Has the occupation held?

Well, yes and no. The first great flaw of the film, to me, is its almost unrelenting lugubriousness. It is thorough, solemn, heavily moral, and gloomy. I know this is a tradition in the genre of the fairy tale—Baba Yaga of the cold Russian winters comes to mind—but it is not to my liking. Gloom in *portions* by all means, at awful moments. But (and I freely admit this is absolutely a matter of personal taste) there should also be much brightness, entirely untainted by solemn reflection; and I always need, very badly, happiness at the end. Yet in spite of resolutions, rescues, and cleanings-away, *Crystal*'s end is extraordinarily bleak.

A second great flaw in *Crystal*—and I suspect it's due largely to the enormous expenses involved—is the feeling that its Fairyland is so thinly peopled as to be desolate. Still, it's not just a question of the costliness of puppets and ingenious costumes. A bigger population might cleverly have been suggested. Orson Welles in *Citizen Kane*, to give a classic example, created mobs with five or ten extras or with long shots of banners backed by sound effects of cheering crowds. But of course, that requires a different mental slant. I think the people who

made *Crystal* decided that if they did not actually show the crowds, they'd be cheating.

The population we do see in this sparsely settled Fairyland is, by and large, most interesting, and the most interesting of all, of course, are the villains. These are the nasty Skekses, who look like vultures in Tudor finery and dwell in a black, spiky castle along with their beetlelike warriors the Garthim, and crystal bats, and a number of sort-of rats. All are quite well-realized, and when a Skeksis dies he crumbles like an old building in a most engaging manner.

The Mystics are the best of the good guys, being part Navajo and part old bloodhound. Their way of life is nicely suggested—a kind of dreamy American Indian mishmash—and the only problem I had with them was why wasn't their tribe given a Dunsanian name, as with the other species?

*Crystal* gets into trouble with the Gelflings, which are (what's left of them—there are only two) as close to human form as any creature gets in the film, and are therefore (as happens with *Snow White* and any number of similar ventures) the most unconvincing. One odd blunder is that our first view of the male Gelfling shows him near stripped, and for quite a long-held shot, so that, try as we might to do otherwise, we know without any doubt that we are being introduced to a puppet. It's particularly strange because throughout the rest of the film we see him clothed and thus more convincing.

But the worst part about the Gelflings is that they are an accurate reflection on Brian Froud's work, which is mostly really swell stuff, but which is at its weakest when he's doing his wispy creatures. (I know *Faeries* is a big bestseller—what can I say?) And the Gelflings are decidedly wispy.

However, that aside, there are some really marvelous things in the movie. My favorite sequence takes place in a swamp full of grand inventions, both vegetable and animal, including flying flowers and a lovable swamp mother. It all worked so well it made me wonder if the sequel to *Crystal* might not be well advised to skip the trappings of plot and present itself as a travelogue. **17**

# Music

by Jack Sullivan



**B**ernard Herrmann, the greatest composer of film music in the symphonic tradition, once quipped that he would only be "remembered for a few lousy movies." A gentle man with a prickly facade, Herrmann was perhaps indulging in calculated understatement, yet his remark does reflect the low state in which film composers are often held by the musical establishment. This snobbery is especially unfortunate—indeed, masochistic—given the terrible difficulty contemporary composers have marketing their work. As composer Constant Lambert has astutely observed, "Film music offers the serious composer what has been lacking since the eighteenth century—a reasonable commercial outlet for his activities, comparable to the 'occasional' music which the greatest classical composers did not despise to write."

Actually, "occasional" music has always been somewhat controversial, and not always for reasons of snobbery. The fundamental esthetic question is whether music composed expressly for an extra-musical medium can retain its identity and emotional power if wrenched from its original context—whether it be a play, a church service, or, in our own time, a film. Certainly the prospect of listening to a Herrmann film score as a piece of "pure" music is altogether desirous: to be sure, the music for *Psycho*, a film most of us have seen, is especially shuddery because it evokes the film; but the music for *Vertigo*, which no one can see because Hitchcock yanked it out of

circulation, is a sensuous and shivery experience entirely on its own. The music survives its original film context because Herrmann was a great composer: his best music doesn't "accompany" a given film so much as saturate and enhance it.

Herrmann's first break in film music came, auspiciously enough, when Orson Welles asked him to compose the music for *Citizen Kane* (1940), a film considered by such critics as the late Dwight MacDonald to be America's greatest. Herrmann had already written radio music for Welles's "Mercury Theater Playhouse," and when Welles decided to make the move to cinema he brought Herrmann along. The prelude to *Citizen Kane* opens with a ghostly variation on the medieval death chant "Dies irae" (quoted also by Berlioz, Liszt, and Rachmaninoff), which immediately bathes the film in a morose, sinister atmosphere. A dramatic glissando for the harp, one of Herrmann's favorite instruments (the *Twelve-Mile Reef* score features nine of them) introduces the contrasting "Rosebud" motif for strings, a bittersweet glimpse of crushed idealism. At the end, Herrmann brings back the "Dies irae" theme in a solemn brass chorale, the symphonic weight of which had not been heard in movies since Prokofiev's score for Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky*. Utterly lacking in Herrmann's score was the schmaltzy, swooning "big tune" approach to movie music so widespread in Hollywood.

Although large sections of *Citizen Kane* contain mysterious, unsettling

music, Herrmann's first consistently nightmarish score came four years later in *Hangover Square*, John Brahm's film about a psychotic, murderous composer who sets fire to a concert hall during a performance of his own piano concerto. This piece, Herrmann's *Concerto Macabre*, is a genuine, full-bodied piano concerto in the Gothic tradition of Liszt's spectacularly grim *Todtentanz for Piano and Orchestra* (described in these pages in the February, 1982 issue). Herrmann was the only Hollywood composer to orchestrate his own scores, and the results are especially telling here: the somber orchestration emphasizes the dark sonorities of double basses (a premonition of *Psycho*) and lower brass, while the percussive piano writing plunges down into the lowest bass register. At the climax, we hear a series of dramatic suspensions, a favorite Herrmann device used repeatedly in later scores to evoke wrenching ambiguity and irresolution. The ending has the mad pianist finishing the concerto alone, deep in the bass, the terrified orchestra having long since fled in disarray.

Both the *Citizen Kane* suite and the *Hangover Square* concerto are available in a hard-to-find 1974 RCA recording (*The Classic Film Scores of Bernard Herrmann*, Charles Gerhardt, National Philharmonic Orchestra, RCA ARL1-0707, OP). It is unfortunate that this stunningly recorded disc (which also includes *White Witch Doctor* and *Beneath the Twelve-Mile Reef*) is out of print in the U.S., for neither *Hangover Square*



nor the more spectral portions of *Citizen Kane* are available elsewhere. (The British version, still in print, is listed as RCA GL 43441.)

After *Hangover Square*, Herrmann became increasingly preoccupied with terror, suspense, and fantasy. His early television credits include music for *The Alfred Hitchcock Show*, *Kraft Suspense Theater*, and *The Twilight Zone*. Beginning with Joseph L. Mankiewicz's *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir* (1947) and Robert Wise's *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), Herrmann turned out an extraordinary series of scores for fantasy, science fiction, and suspense films.

Attractive excerpts from these scores are available in three collections recorded by Herrmann himself for London's "Phase IV" recordings, a series noted for its brilliantly close-up but rather cold and unreverberant sound. *The Mysterious Film World of Bernard Herrmann* (Bernard Herrmann, National Philharmonic Orchestra, London SPC 21137) opens with the music for Cy Endfield's 1961 *Mysterious Island*. The prelude, which suggests a stormy seascape, unleashes massive modal chords which continue to cut into the following "Balloon" sequence. We are then treated to musical portraits of three of Ray Harryhausen's celebrated oversized critters: "The Giant Crab," "The Giant Bee," and "The Giant Bird." An even more impressive score is the music for Don Chaffey's 1933 *Jason and the Argonauts*, which eliminates strings and uses brass, wind, and percussion to create an austere, muscular sound of tremendous weight and presence.

**Bernard Herrmann Conducts** (London Philharmonic and National Philharmonic Orchestras, London SPC 2177) offers five scenes from Truffaut's *Fahrenheit 451* (1966). With his usual fondness for unusual orchestration, Herrmann uses a simple, pared-down ensemble of strings, harp, and percussion to create a sound far removed from the "futuristic" electronic gimmickry of most science fiction films. In fact, *Fahrenheit 451* is one of Herrmann's most mysterious and beautiful scores, especially the prelude, with its bewitching echoes of the "Neptune" finale of Holst's *The Planets*, and the book-burning scene, with its leaping,

flame-like harp arpeggios.

The most complete overall introduction to Herrmann is provided on a recording of re-releases simply entitled *Bernard Herrmann* (London SPC 21151), a record featuring short, composer-conducted excerpts from eleven scores (including *Citizen Kane* and *Jason and the Argonauts*). One of the most attractive snippets here is the overture to *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad* (1958), Herrmann's *Scheherazade*, with its Arabian Nights orientalism. Another is the "Atlantis" sequence from *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1959), ingeniously scored for an orchestra without strings but with no less than five organs. This quiet, eerie music is pure atmosphere, color, and goose pimples.

The most important items on the record, however, are the excerpts from Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958), *North by Northwest* (1959), and *Psycho* (1960), the most enduring fruits of the greatest director/composer collaboration since Eisenstein/Prokofiev. The shortest of these is the kinetic overture to *North by Northwest*, which opens with the ominous roar of MGM's Leo the Lion and builds to what Herrmann called a musical depiction of "the crazy dance about to take place between Cary Grant and the world." The entire score is available on a sensational digital British recording *North by Northwest*, (Laurie Johnson, London Studio Symphony Orchestra, Unicorn-Kanchana, DKP 9000).

Even more gripping is the music for *Psycho*, Herrmann's most horrific score and surely his most revolutionary. In previous scores, Herrmann moved away from surface glitter and extraneous Hollywood "big tunes." In *Psycho*, Herrmann abandoned melody almost entirely, relying on slashing, dissonant chords, athematic atmosphere sequences, and a violent rhythmic pulse, devices which effectively fill the audience with unease even when there is nothing overtly disturbing on the screen. From the first knife-like chords in the title sequence to the final bleak ninth chord, *Psycho* gives us Herrmann's art stripped to its stark essentials. The orchestra, for example, consists of strings alone, in order, as Herrmann put it, to "complement the black and white photography of the film with a black and white sound."

The most famous sequence is the gruesome shower scene, which Hitchcock originally wanted to film with no music at all, and which became, at Herrmann's insistence, an unforgettable fusion of music and action. The violently screeching string chords are a classic example of Herrmann's ability to cut to the essence of a scene and translate it unerringly into sound. But the quiet music is also masterly, as in the strange tremolos and harmonics in the "Discovery" sequence. Herrmann once stated that film music is "the connecting link between screen and audience, reaching out and enveloping all in one single experience." In *Psycho*, the most "enveloping" of all his scores, he reaches out to grab us by the throat. This is quite simply the most unforgettable horror music in film history.

Amazingly, the complete *Psycho* was not recorded until 1975, and even that version is out of print (*Psycho*, Bernard Herrmann, National Philharmonic Orchestra, Unicorn RHM 336). Fortunately, Herrmann reconstructed a fourteen-minute "Narrative for Orchestra" based on the score in 1968, which is available on the *Bernard Herrmann* record and presented in a valuable anthology of Hitchcock scores which includes music from *Marnie*, *North by Northwest*, *Vertigo*, and *The Trouble with Harry* (*Music from the Great Movie Thrillers*, Bernard Herrmann, London Philharmonic Orchestra, London SP 44126).

Three episodes from *Vertigo* are available on this record, but it is better, as always, to get the complete music: Herrmann's art is organic rather than episodic, with motifs accruing new meanings and nuances each time they recur. It is now possible to hear the entire *Vertigo* score from the original soundtrack on a newly pressed, superbly recorded Mercury "Golden Imports" release (*Vertigo*, Muir Mathieson, Sinfonia of London, Mercury SRI 75117). This record is well worth having: if *Psycho* is Herrmann's most economical score, *Vertigo* is his most expansive, with a terrifying preview of *Psycho* in the "Rooftop," "Tower," and "Nightmare" sequences and the most passionate, haunting love music Herrmann was ever to write in the love scenes. Indeed, *Vertigo* has the widest



emotional and technical range of any Herrmann score.

Herrmann broke with Hitchcock after *Marnie* (1964) because the studio began demanding the very hit-parade style of material Herrmann had devoted his career to opposing. He experienced a slight decline in the late sixties, then came back with an awkward start in the early seventies. His scores for Alastair Reid's *The Night Digger* (1970) and Brian de Palma's *Sisters* (1972) make both films seem more frightening than they actually are, and his shivery score for *It's Alive* (1974) is surely the most bizarre coupling of a distinguished score with a B-movie (albeit a trashily effective one) in movie history.

But 1975, the last year of Herrmann's life, saw the composition of two of his strongest works. *Obsession*, his second de Palma score, looks back to *Vertigo* as if in a dream, using a spectral chorus to evoke some of the motifs and moods of the earlier film. Far from a

mechanical reworking of familiar material, *Obsession* is one of Herrmann's most haunting, romantic scores.

His last work, *Taxi Driver*, is, like the Martin Scorsese film itself, a masterpiece: its weirdly distorted blues riffs imbue Herrmann's characteristic harmonies with an energy that builds and finally explodes into the frightening percussion crashes of the film's brutal climax. Herrmann's best work always evoked terror and menace, and *Taxi Driver* is a fitting, if tragically premature finale. His death at the age of sixty-five was a sad blow to the worlds of both music and film.

In the evolution of twentieth-century music, Bernard Herrmann was not an especially radical or innovative composer. Unlike Ives and Debussy, whose works he loved and championed as a conductor, he did not significantly advance the language of music. Like Brahms, he was a synthesizer, not an innovator. His

achievement was to incorporate established techniques of twentieth-century symphonic music into film scores of unsurpassed intelligence and poetry. Sometimes these techniques are fiercely dissonant (the influence of Bartok throbs in the background of *Psycho*, as Varese perhaps does in *Jason and the Argonauts*); sometimes, as in the film scores of Erich Korngold, they are neo-romantic—indeed, almost Wagnerian. But Herrmann always used them in an utterly personal way: every Herrmann score is unmistakably by Herrmann.

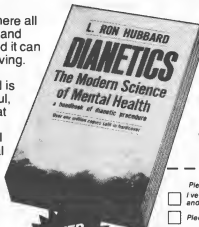
Unlike Vaughan Williams, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and Walton, who wrote distinguished film music on an occasional basis, Herrmann made his mark primarily in his work for film. He was not the first great composer who wrote for film but rather the first great film composer, a unique and important category in the music of our time. As we shall see in future columns, he was by no means the last. **17**

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# Nostalgia

## Walking with Zombies and Other Saturday Afternoon Pastimes

by Ron Goulart



A recent PBS retrospective of classic horror movies left me with the unsettling realization that I'd done the better part of my initial spook-film watching during the wrong decade entirely. The movies that were featured—usually sandwiched between programs rich with Alistair Cooke's erudite fatuities or Pavarotti's crystal-shattering arias—seemed to be mostly from the 1930s: films such as *Frankenstein*, *Dracula*, and *The Bride of Frankenstein*. While I did begin toddling into movie palaces toward the tail end of the thirties, my most serious and dedicated moviegoing took place in the forties. I'll be devoting my space this issue to the horror movies of that decade and to putting forth, partly as an act of cultural self-defense, my own list of classics.

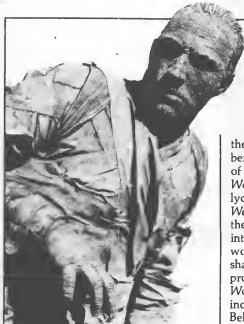
A word, first, about ideal viewing conditions for the supernatural gems of this period. I first saw most of them in one or another of the half-dozen movie houses in the sleepy, ivy-covered California college town where I grew to manhood. On Saturday and Sunday afternoons I could be found at our nearest cinema palace, which was called the Rivoli. It was—in memory, at least—an immense place, and presided over by a manager who

wore a tuxedo during every waking hour of his life. Several odors fought for dominance, including those of hot buttered popcorn, the strong soap they used to disinfect the bathrooms, and the scent of approaching puberty (a heady mixture that included sizable portions of perspiration and flatulence). Seen under these conditions while hunkered in the vast surrounding darkness, almost any occult movie was sure to have a profound effect on me. But I'll try to sort the wheat from the chaff and suggest which ones still look okay on the tiny screen of a television set.

One of the systems we used to rate horror films of the era was based on how easy the monsters were to imitate during the hike home from the theater and in the school yard the following week. The *Frankenstein* monster ranked high, as did the Wolf Man, the Mummy, and any and all zombies. Personally I liked to do Bela Lugosi as Ygor, the demented sheepherder who took to palling around with the *Frankenstein* monster. Lugosi played the role twice, in *The Son of Frankenstein* (1939) and *The Ghost of Frankenstein* (1942). Ygor had survived a completely justified hanging, and it caused him to walk around in a very odd manner with

his head cocked far to one side. No matter who was emoting, even such horror heavyweights as Basil Rathbone, Lionel Atwill, and Cedric Hardwicke, all Lugosi had to do was come shuffling in and do his Ygor shtick to completely steal the scene. I've long nursed the theory that Lugosi was one of the great comedians of the movies, but won't go into an elaboration here.

The Mummy first surfaced in a 1932 film of that title, a slow heavy movie with Boris Karloff in the title role. But he was mostly seen in civvies in the film, behaving like a beardless Svengali. The really effective and fun-to-impersonate Mummy didn't come along until 1940 in Universal's *The Mummy's Hand*. Tom Tyler, who'd been a cowboy hero throughout the 1930s and who'd be Captain Marvel in the serials, was the first to play the new, improved Mummy. Wrapped up in what looked like hundreds of yards of second-hand gauze and appearing about as presentable as a package sent Third Class, Tyler limped and lurched across the screen. He strangled tomb-defilers and carried off nightgowned damsels with admirable disheveled aplomb. *The Mummy's Hand* was an enjoyable film (I saw it again just last



Above: "The really effective and fun-to-impersonate Mummy." Tom Tyler wore the sheets in *The Mummy's Hand* (1940).

Left: "The basic plot was swiped from *Jane Eyre*." Long before Club Med, Val Lewton's *I Walked with a Zombie* (1943) offered glimpses of the complete Caribbean experience.

week) and has a strong B-movie cast. Cecil Kellaway shines as a tipsy stage magician who is persuaded to finance an expedition to find a lost tomb. The dedicated archaeologist is played by Dick Foran, another cowboy actor and a singing one at that, who did most of his archaeological work wearing a white suit and a danceman's straw hat. There are not one but two evil priests to be seen. One is played in high style by Eduardo Ciannelli (the same fellow who gave Cary Grant and his sidekicks such a bad time in *Gunga Din*) and the other by the formidable George Zucco. It's my impression that Zucco (who was also the first to play Professor Moriarty in the Rathbone-Bruce *Sherlock Holmes* series) was in every single horror movie of the forties. He wears a fez in this one and looks like a crazed Shriner. There were several more Mummy movies made early in the decade, all with Lon Chaney, Jr. under the wrappings, but none equaled this one.

Certainly no actor of that decade was more put upon than Lon Chaney, Jr. He had curses heaped upon him, electricity shot into him, vampires and werewolves nibbling at him. He survived it all and kept plodding along, almost able to hide

the fact that he was nowhere near to being the actor his father was. One of his better performances was in *The Wolf Man* (1941). Like earlier lycanthrope films (such as 1935's *Werewolf of London*), the victim of the blight in this effort didn't turn into a full-fledged down-on-all-fours wolf. Rather, he became incredibly shaggy and snarled a lot. Another product of the Universal studios, *The Wolf Man* had an impressive cast that included Claude Rains, Ralph Bellamy, and Evelyn Ankers (who must be tied with Zucco for the greatest number of appearances in 1940s chillers). Bela Lugosi appears briefly as the source of the werewolf virus, and Maria Ouspenskaya delivers what has to be the quintessential Old Gypsy Fortune-Teller performance. The best parts of the picture occur on nights of a full moon when poor Chaney, writhing in torment, is slowly transformed into a snarling wolfman. Any kid could easily identify with a guy who tore up his room, smashed windows, went careening around the neighborhood doing mischief, and came dragging home long after curfew. What we didn't much care for was his stern father (played by Claude Rains in his best sympathetic martinet style) criticizing him all the time, and finally beating him to death on the fog-ridden moors with a silver-headed cane. That cane looked a lot more dangerous than the traditional razor strap or hickory rod. Eventually, as is often the case, the box office proved stronger than death, and Chaney came back to life to play the Wolf Man for several more go-rounds.

He was also given the opportunity to portray some of Universal's stock creatures. He donned the lift shoes and the grim makeup to be the monster in *The Ghost of Frankenstein* (1942). Ralph Bellamy was in this one, too, along with the ubiquitous Evelyn Ankers. The picture was stolen, as previously mentioned, by Lugosi as the dippy shepherd. Nineteen forty-three found Chaney haunting the Southern bayous as Dracula in *Son of Dracula*. Don't ask me who played the title role, since the son never rises in this. The put-upon girl is—which should come as no surprise by now—Blond Evelyn Ankers. The evil lady was played by

Louise Albritton in a black wig that looked left over from a road-show production of *Antony and Cleopatra*. My favorite bit in this one occurs when the good guys spell the name, Chaney is using backwards and get an inkling of who he really might be. He's been calling himself Count Alucard.

In the forties, as I moved from cherubic little tyke to acned teen, I paid little attention to who produced or directed the movies I was consuming. Thus it wasn't until some years later that I became aware that several of my favorite scary movies of the period had been produced by Val Lewton and directed, for the most part, by Jacques Tourneur. From 1942 through 1946 Lewton, working with his own production unit at RKO, turned out nine horror films, including *Cat People*, *I Walked with a Zombie*, *The Leopard Man*, *Isle of the Dead*, and *The Body Snatcher*. At the time, I preferred *Cat People*, but now I find *I Walked with a Zombie* to be the best of the lot. Too bad, in a way, because it's difficult to have a serious discussion about a film with a title like that. There isn't much out-and-out horror in it, but it is a very unsettling film. The scene wherein Frances Dee, as the hired nurse, walks Tom Conway's zombie wife through the windswept jungle to a voodoo meeting is still highly effective. And there is also a scene in which all that happens is that calypso singer Sir Lancelot slowly walks toward Dee as she sits at an outdoor cafe table and sings a song to her about the family she is working for. The scene manages to be quietly chilling. As Lewton admitted, the basic plot was swiped from *Jane Eyre*, but he and Tourneur created something much beyond just another Gothic.

A few months ago in these pages, when I reviewed the sorry remake of *Cat People*, I extolled the virtues of Lewton and company. They were able to create terror and unease without ever showing us a disemboweled corpse or a naked girl being sliced up by a chainsaw. As time goes by their achievements seem increasingly impressive.

On my honor roll of 1940s horror classics I also make room for movies that are masterpieces of god-awfulness. Among the best in this



"Personally, I liked to do Ygor." Bela Lugosi and Lon Chaney, Jr. starred in *The Ghost of Frankenstein* (1942).

genre are two Bela Lugosi epics, *Devil Bat* (1941) and *Voodoo Man* (1941). Both have much to commend them, but I am somewhat fonder of *Voodoo Man*. Besides Lugosi, the picture also stars John Carradine and George Zucco. A mad doctor, Lugosi is waylaying young women and using them in experiments designed to return his living-dead wife to normal. In order to summon girls, he has Zucco, who in everyday life seems to run the local gas station, drop over to his creepy mansion. Once there Zucco dons a black robe and a silly hat and starts babbling gibberish. This voodoo ritual is powerful enough to cause young women to hop out of their beds clad in filmy nightdresses and come marching to the mansion. Whenever I have downcast moments and think I may be prostituting my talent, I have but to think of Zucco, an actor trained on the British stage, chanting away in his voodoo robe. It gives me the strength to go on.

In *Devil Bat* Lugosi is also a mad doctor. He is so inventive that he creates not only gigantic killer bats but an after-shave lotion that attracts them. The scenes in which Lugosi passes out free samples of the lotion to his intended victims are the high points of the movie.

Another staple of the forties was the horror comedy. Looking backward, I suspect this subspecies had an even more profound effect on me than the more somber films mentioned above, and that it quite probably had a mutagenic effect on my creative faculties. To this day I can't seem to write a completely serious ghost or horror tale.

My favorite came along right at the start of the decade—Bob Hope's *Ghost Breakers* (1940). Directed by George Marshall from a script by Walter DeLeon, this film was the second of three that teamed Hope with Paulette Goddard. The first, *The Cat and the Canary* (1939), was also a horror comedy, and Hope considers it "the turning point of my movie career." It was, he says, "an A-picture tailored for me. Before that, I was wearing other actors' castoffs." *The Cat and the Canary*, even

though it included Gale Sondergaard and George Zucco in the cast, is not as good as *Ghost Breakers*. Both Hope and Goddard are much more at ease in their second film, and Hope has Willie Best as his sidekick. Although Best has been criticized by some critics for his portrayals of the stereotyped black, he was an exceptional comic actor. In this picture he is especially good in a dockside sequence where he's trying to communicate with Hope, who happens to be locked inside a steamer trunk. A drunk (played by Jack Norton, who seldom played anything else on the screen) totters along and assumes that Best is a ventriloquist. *Ghost Breakers* is an Old Dark House movie at heart, with a gloomy castle on an island off Cuba serving as the house. The sequences in the shadowy castle, complete with a ghost, a zombie, and a crypt containing a hidden treasure, manage to be scary and funny at the same time. Marshall, by the way, also directed a dreary remake of this. It was a Martin and Lewis vehicle called *Scared Stiff* (1953).

Less subtle than the Hope-Goddard movies was *Hold That Ghost* (1941), an Abbott and Costello epic. In this one they inherit a seemingly haunted inn that once belonged to a defunct gangster. They spend a stormy night along with Joan Davis, Richard Carlson, and the ever-present Evelyn Ankers. When this picture was first released, I was of the opinion that Abbott and Costello, along with the Three Stooges, were among the funniest fellows on the face of the earth. Having matured some in the intervening four-plus decades, I no longer even chuckle over the Stooges' antics, but I must confess I still like Abbott and Costello. In *Hold That Ghost* it's Costello, the more likable of the two and the one kids always identify with, who does all the scared stiff routines that somebody like Willie Best was noted for. A much better picture and the high point of A&C's career was the horror comedy *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* (1948). In this Lugosi returns for his final portrayal of Dracula and

Chaney gives his farewell performance as the Wolf Man.

Quite possibly more horror comedies were made in the 1940s than any other time before or since. Just about everybody made at least one. The Bowery Boys made several, including *Spooks Run Wild* (1941)—with Bela Lugosi and a newcomer named Ava Gardner—and *Spook Busters* (1946). One of the Blondie series, *Blondie Has Servant Trouble* (1940), puts Penny Singleton and Arthur Lake into a haunted mansion. Harold Peary, then famous on the radio, did *Gildersleeve's Ghost* in 1944. This RKO comedy, which I find myself enjoying every time I see it, contains an invisible girl, a mad doctor, a runaway gorilla, and two ghosts—all crammed into a running time of only sixty-four minutes. The director was Gordon Douglas, who went on to direct *Them* and *In Like Flint*.

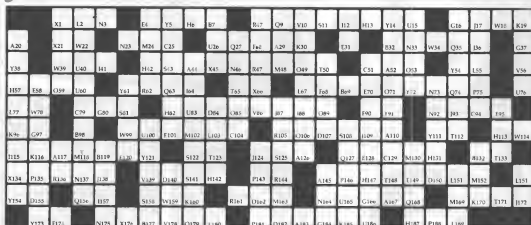
Another Douglas effort was *Zombies on Broadway* (1945). This is a dopey movie, but I can't help liking it. The stars are a comedy team created just for the movies, RKO's answer to Abbott and Costello. Somehow, though, Wally Brown and Alan Carney never caught on. In *Zombies on Broadway*, Brown, the tall thin one, and Carney, the short fat one, are sent to the Caribbean to find a real zombie to be used in a nightclub show in Manhattan. Since the film was shot at RKO, where *I Walked with a Zombie* had been made a couple of years earlier, you get the impression the comics have landed on the same island that Frances Dee went to. Bela Lugosi is on hand, turning out first-rate zombies in his walled castle. Also to be seen are Sir Lancelot, doing more ominous calypso tunes, and a black actor named Darby Jones. Jones, whose entire screen career apparently consists of two credits, is the chief zombie. He was also the zombie in the Lewton film.

As I near the finish line on this piece, I realize I haven't covered half of the 1940s horror comedies and not one of the invisible man films. Give me a few months and maybe I'll try again. **17**



# Fantasy Acrostic #1

by  
Peter Cannon



Here's a puzzle for aficionados of weird tales and *Weird Tales*. From the clues listed below, guess the words they define and write the answers over the numbered dashes. Then transfer each letter to the square with the same number in the crossword-type grid. Reading from left to right, the completed grid will spell out a key quotation from a well-known work of fantasy. Black squares separate the

individual words. (Some words, therefore, are broken off at the right edge of the grid and continue at the left, one line below, just as on a printed page.)

Note: The first letters of each answer, read in order, (29—177—94 etc.), provide the author's name and the title of the work. (Answers appear on page 47.)

A. Small thin sponge cake

29 44 110 183 52 145 167 20 126 117

B. The Castle of \_\_\_\_\_ (granddaddy of gothic novels)

177 32 69 98 119 7 132

C. Made null; excreted

94 51 79 129 25 104

D. Phantom; ideal ("It was the ghoulish shade of decay, antiquity, and desolation; the putrid, dripping \_\_\_\_\_ of unwholesome revelation.")

140 150 155 162 107 182 84

E. Conan the \_\_\_\_\_ (Hint: not "Barbarian," not "Conqueror")

120 128 4 58 95 70 31 101 149

F. English poet and dramatist (*The Fair Penitent*), poet laureate and first modern editor of Shakespeare (1674-1718)

28 68 90 174

G. Achieve; reach

166 16 80 184 37 97

H. Bare-knuckle combat; means of fighting in Barlow's "The Battle That Ended the Century"

187 42 6 131 113 82 57 147 13 142

I. Dyed; colored

88 12 115 157 41 64

J. Brain trust (2 wds.), e.g. Hudson Institute

172 17 93 109 36 124 153 87 138

K. British horror writer (1877-1918) specializing in sea tales; see April 1982 issue of *Twilight Zone*

170 116 30 185 160 96 19

L. Weird, eerie, ("It had been an \_\_\_\_\_ thing—no wonder sensitive students shudder at the Puritan age in Massachusetts.")

55 77 180 189 103 151 67 2

M. Abstinence from sexual intercourse; purity

102 24 118 130 163 48 169 152

N. One who transmutes base metals into gold

73 92 137 33 3 164 46 175 23

O. Adolphe de Castro story (2 wds. after "The"; see November 1928 issue of *Weird Tales*); final exam

179 59 106 85 49 71 89 53

P. American bookman and poet (*The Hermaphrodite*); protégé of Hart Crane (1887-1976); also, what—literally—philanthropists do (2 wds.)

135 143 181 75 8 188 146

Q. Salve; unguent

27 156 35 74 127 9 63 168

R. A crowning ornament or detail (Arch.); ornamental knob on lamp top. ("The vacant church was in a state of great decrepitude. Some of the high stone buttresses had fallen, and several delicate \_\_\_\_\_s lay half lost among the brown, neglected weeds and grasses.")

144 62 161 105 136 47

S. Murder weapon preferred by some in Texas (2 wds.)

11 125 141 122 43 81 108 158

T. American stained-glass artist (1848-1933)

65 148 112 133 171 123 50

U. Witches' holiday

40 76 15 100 83 26 165 186 60

V. "The Fall of the House of \_\_\_\_\_"

178 139 56 86 10

W. Ancient Roman porker (2 wds.)

78 159 39 18 22 99 34 114

X. One of "an unobtrusive but very ancient people, more numerous formerly than they are today."

176 66 45 134 21 1

Y. Corrupt; unsound, unhealthy

14 154 173 54 5 72 121 38 111 61 91 17

Etc.

## SHORT-SHORT

*Twilight Zone's* Second Annual Short Story Contest is now over—the three winners appeared in our previous issue—and our Third is now under way (see announcement, page 48). But we wouldn't want to close our books on last year's competition without reprinting what was undoubtedly the strangest entry of all, submitted by Bill Devoe of Long Beach, California, who describes it as "something I spewed out between Major League Ideas—just my comment on story writing in general. Ya know, every story I've ever read or written, or any story ever written, always has something big happen, some sort of tension or event that people remember. I don't know, maybe I'm nuts."

He's even supplied his own blurb:

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A WRITER FORGETS A PLOT, A CONFLICT, A CLIMAX, AND A RESOLUTION? YOU GET . . .

## THE STORY THAT NEVER WAS

The old man in the bar slumped over in his booth and threw up on the floor. My wife turned away.

It's funny, because only thirty minutes ago we were in the ballpark watching the Dodgers, and three hours before that we were making love.

It was just a place to stop for a cold brew . . . but we didn't belong there.

So we left.

## SPEAKING OF CONTESTS . . .

Fans of Lord Bulwer-Lytton's ghostly classic "The Haunted and the Haunters" (and though we are not among them, H.P. Lovecraft and Montague Summers were) will be unhappy to hear of a new writing competition recently reported in the *New York Times*:

## Hunt On Nationwide For Wretched Writers

SAN JOSE, Calif., Jan 29 (AP)—A search is on for the nation's most wretched writers.

English professors at San Jose State University have announced that the Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest, which is in its second year, has been opened to the public for the first time.

The contest seeks the opening sentence to the worst of all possible novels. All entries must be written by the entrant and previously unpublished.

The contest was inspired by Edward Bulwer-Lytton, a writer of the early 19th century, who began his novel "Paul Clifford" this way: "It was a dark and stormy night; the rain fell in torrents—except at occasional intervals, when it was checked by a violent gust of wind which swept up the streets (for it is in London that our scene lies), rattling along the house-tops and fiercely agitating against the scanty flame of the lamps that struggled against the darkness."

## TO SERVE MAN

There's probably no cause for alarm, but writer George R.R. Martin ("Remembering Melody," TZ April '81) swears he saw the above sign while attending a recent sf convention in Dallas. Note: Diners at Tingles should do well on clue A of this issue's TZ Quiz, page 22.



## BIG BUCKS

Yes, we know. You used to have a fabulous collection of Archie comics and an entire run of *Justice League of America*, along with a genuine Space Patrol glow-in-the-dark decoder belt and a ten-tools-in-one Rin Tin Tin Desert Survival Kit, and one day your mother threw them out. And now those things are worth a fortune. (According to Jeff Rovin's *Science Fiction Collector's Catalog*, a Big Little Book called *Flash Gordon and the Monsters of Mongo* is going for \$80 today and another, *Buck Rogers in the City of*

*Floating Globes*, for \$100.)

So just make sure your mother doesn't get her hands on this issue of *Twilight Zone*, because someday you may be able to use it as the down payment on your country home (if the paper doesn't turn to dust first). Our inclusion of *The Raft*—a piece of prime Kingiana—makes the issue even more valuable; a New York rare book dealer has just offered a first edition of *Carrie* ("Fine in d/j with very minor rubbing") for \$100, and another dealer is offering bound review copies of *Cujo* for \$135

and *The Dead Zone* ("A heavily read copy with some minor damp-staining along the bottom edge") for \$225. Finally, the recent catalogue of a certain Texas autograph house lists a Stephen King signature for \$17.50. The item reads, "Bank check made out to him and signed on verso. Dated Dec. 28, 1981. Fine, dark signature." (Well, what kind did they expect?)

TZ note: The catalogue also lists, for the same price, a genuine Rod Serling signature.



Physician-turned-filmmaker George Miller, director of the segment based on "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet," is used to vast spaces—his 1982 *The Road Warrior*, probably the supreme action movie of the last ten years, is set amid an arid Australian landscape stretching for miles in every direction—but *Twilight Zone* has forced him to concentrate his energies. He regards his work on the film as an homage to Rod Serling, whom he credits with having been "consistently able to do more with less."

## From Down Under to '20,000 Feet' by Robert Martin

George Miller has come a long way from Chinchilla, the tiny Australian town where he was born. And while *Mad Max* and its sequel *The Road Warrior* are solid evidence of his filmmaking talent, there's a good deal of fortuity involved in the combination of circumstances that brought him to Steven Spielberg's *Twilight Zone* project.

For instance, it was Miller's good fortune to have a twin brother. All through medical school at the University of New South Wales, Miller would spend his time at the local movie theater, relying upon his med student brother to attend lectures and take detailed notes. Later his brother entered and won a film competition, and won free attendance at a month-long summer film workshop. Luckily, Miller was able to convince the workshop's administrators that he should be allowed to attend as well, and—another stroke of luck—it was there that he met Byron Kennedy, who would later produce both *Mad Max* films.

His involvement in *The Twilight Zone* came about through a similar happy coincidence. In early '82, Miller was in Holly-

wood in preparation for the U.S. release of *The Road Warrior*, when he was invited to visit Spielberg's offices. "They were having a meeting to discuss *The Twilight Zone*," recalls Miller. "I remember Steven was there, Kathy Kennedy, and a few others, and they invited me to sit down. Up to that time, it had been planned to do three stories, and now they'd decided to do a fourth. 'Why don't you do one?' someone said. 'I wasn't sure they weren't having me on at the time.'"

Miller is pleased to be a part of the *Twilight Zone* revival. "We had the series in Australia, you know, and it was regarded as almost a textbook for doing film on a limited budget," he says. "There was a beautifully understated way of doing things, like suggesting an entire vast audience by showing certain individuals, and perhaps a row of hands applauding."

Richard Donner, the director of the tv version of "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet," recalled that episode (in *TZ*'s July '81 issue) as a tactical nightmare, directing a stuntman on a full-sized mock-up of an airplane's wing amid artificial lightning, wind, and rain. Miller responds with laughter at our mention of Donner's problems. "It's funny that you mention that," he says, "because, shortly after we

## TZ MOVIE UPDATE: 'NIGHTMARE' REVISITED . . .

With shooting completed, the four-part Steven Spielberg-John Landis co-production of *The Twilight Zone* is now being readied for a late June release.

Spielberg's modus operandi is to keep everyone in suspense until a movie opens, and *The Twilight Zone* was no exception, with guards posted at the gates or around the perimeter of the sets during shooting (though who could argue with a man who, along with George Lucas, has produced five of the largest-grossing motion pictures of all time?).

Despite the secrecy, however, we've managed to assemble some on-location shots of what promises to be one of this summer's most talked-about films. In our previous issue we gave you a peek at director Joe Dante's segment, the second to be filmed, adapted by veteran *TZ* scriptwriter Richard Matheson from Jerome Bixby's horror tale "It's a Good Life," in which an isolated rural town is terrorized by an innocent-looking little boy with awesome supernatural powers. Originally adapted by Rod Serling for the *Twilight Zone* tv series, the story was one of the highlights of the 1961 season.

Matheson has also worked on the script for the third segment filmed, this

time based on one of his own *Twilight Zone* episodes, the celebrated "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet," in which an airline passenger just recovering from a nervous breakdown comes face to face with a creature out of modern legend—a monstrous airplane-wrecking gremlin. In the original production, televised in 1963, the harried hero (whom all the other passengers believe to be insane) was played by a pre-*Star Trek* William Shatner. The new version, directed by Australia's George Miller (*The Road Warrior*), features Tony Award-winner John Lithgow in the role—and, along for the ride, our own Associate Publisher, Carol Serling, as one of the passengers. She reports that her first acting assignment was anything but glamorous:

"As a rule, working on or in a film and waiting interminable hours for your bit has to be the definite dull domain. Unless you happen to be the star, with your own separate trailer stocked with a good library and a refrigerator full of esoteric food, it really is a bore." Nonetheless, she says, "watching Steven direct his part of the movie was an education and a delight, and I also enjoyed working with Miller—especially the chance to look over

the story-boards before any of the cameras rolled." Thanks to her association with the production, on which she served as project consultant, we hope to bring you several of these storyboards in our next issue, along with some special-effects drawings.



Broadway actor John Lithgow, who played murderous villains in *Brian DePalma's Obsession* and *Blow-Out* and a towering transsexual in *The World According to Garp*, discovers a monster on the wing of an airplane in the segment based on "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet."

finished shooting, someone gave me a book called *The Twilight Zone Companion*, and of course I immediately looked up 'Nightmare at 20,000 Feet.' There were Richard Donner's words, describing his experience—and it was exactly what I'd just gone through!"

The film itself will differ in several respects from the Donner version, particularly since Miller's script leans more toward Matheson's original short-story treatment than Matheson's own television script did. "For instance," says Miller, "the Shotner character was traveling with his wife, a character that was not in the short story, and for that reason the printed story was much more internalized—and more frightening. Of course, it makes telling the story a bit harder, but that's the way we chose to do it."

With his share of *The Twilight Zone* completed, Miller looks forward to his return to Australia to begin his next collaboration with Terry Hayes, co-writer on *The Road Warrior*. "We've been trying to get together to write something for more than a year now, but things have prevented it—*The Road Warrior* and *The Twilight Zone*. There are several things I'd like to do, but I won't be sure just what it will be until we actually start writing."



Born in upstate New York, Mel Gibson is the number-one box office star in Australia thanks to the success of the "Max" pictures.



Clutching her trusty *Twilight Zone*, Associate Publisher Carol Serling—who plays one of the passengers on the "Nightmare" flight—joins director Miller for a chat over the story-boards. Says Miller: "Believe it or not, about two years ago I was saying to someone, 'Wouldn't it be lovely if some people got together and made a tribute to *The Twilight Zone*?'"

## Mad Max Remembers George Miller

by James Verniere

In last summer's science fiction hit, *The Road Warrior*, Australian actor Mel Gibson portrayed a futuristic knight errant hurtling across a blasted landscape in a V8 Interceptor on a quest for tomorrow's holy grail: gasoline. As Mad Max the Road Warrior, Gibson was the mythic onthero of the apocalypse, a punk black-leather kamikaze in search of something worth slamming into.

In person, actor Mel Gibson has much better manners than the snarling, shotgun-toting Max. He's young (twenty-seven), shy, and very skeptical about the recognition his success in *The Road Warrior* has brought him. He's also a serious actor (he has done Shakespeare on the stage in Sydney), not a matinee idol, and that seriousness is evidenced in his performances in films such as *Tim*, *Gallipoli*, and his latest, Peter Weir's *The Year of Living Dangerously*, in which he plays opposite Spurgeon Weaver.

Born in Peekskill, New York, in 1956, the son of a railway brakeman, Mel Gibson emigrated to Australia with his family—including ten brothers and sisters—in 1968, where he quickly acquired an Australian accent. ("I figured the sooner I fit in," he says, "the better off I'd be.") While a student at the National Institute of Dramatic Arts, Gibson played a bit part in a low-budget beach movie before being cast by director George Miller in a violent revenge film called *Mad Max*, which went on to earn over a hundred million dollars in rentals at home and abroad. In fact, *Mad Max* was a tremendous success everywhere but in the U.S., where it was spottily distributed and where it became a cult film after being aired on cable television.

After the success of *Mad Max*, Gibson proved that he could add critical acclaim to his popularity at the box office with his performances in *Tim*, in which he played a retarded youth, and *Gallipoli*, in which he played a young adventurer who goes off to World War I in hope of glory.

Gibson's performance in *The Road Warrior* (called *Mad Max II* everywhere but in the U.S.) has established him as an international star, Australia's first, and his performance in *The Year of Living Dangerously* should help him to retain that status.

The actor, who makes his home in Sydney with his wife and three children, was in Manhattan recently to promote his latest film.

**TZ:** How did you land the part in *Mad Max*?

Gibson: I was called to audition like a dozen others. George Miller's idea of an audition is to have the actor tell him a

joke. I guess I must've told a good one.  
 TZ: Why do you think *Mad Max* and *The Road Warrior* were so successful?

Gibson: Because they're probably the classiest B-grade trash you'll ever see. It's the talent of George Miller. He turns trash into art. It's amazing.

TZ: How long did it take to shoot the films?

Gibson: Nine weeks for *Mad Max* and, three months for *The Road Warrior*. Considering that George had not directed a feature film before, I'd say that *Mad Max* was a major feat.

TZ: Do you consider yourself American or Australian?

Gibson: Well, I was born in New York, but I really grew up in Australia, a process which may not be over yet. Growing up, I mean.

TZ: How would you describe Peter Weir's film, *The Year of Living Dangerously*?

Gibson: It's difficult, because the film operates on many levels. On one level, it's a love story set in Indonesia during the collapse of the Sukarno regime, but it's also about the clash between the East and the West.

TZ: What is Peter Weir's greatest strength as a director?

Gibson: His ability to communicate ideas through visual imagery.

TZ: Has Hollywood beckoned since *The Road Warrior*?

Gibson (frowning): I just escaped there. TZ: What will your next film be?

Gibson: I don't know. I'm trying to be careful. I liked *Mad Max* and *Road Warrior*, but I don't want to be Mr. Action Adventure.

TZ: Then there's no chance that we'll be seeing you in *Mad Max III*?

Gibson: No way.

## ... AND A RETURN TRIP TO CHILDHOOD

The final segment to be filmed was Spielberg's own, from a script by Richard Matheson based on George Clayton Johnson's *Twilight Zone* episode "Kick the Can." Appropriately for the director of *E.T.*, it's the gentlest and most touching of the four stories, a fantasy about old age and a magical return to youth. The episode stars Scatman Crothers, best known to filmgoers as the ill-fated Halloran in Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*. Crothers also appeared in *Silver Streak*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, and *Lady Sings the Blues*, as well as in the tv shows *Chico and the Man* and *Roots*. (Look for him, too, in the recently completed tv version of *Casablanca*.)

For Spielberg, who has deservedly earned a reputation as the Pied Piper of children's directors, it was his first occasion to work with true old-timers, and he claims to have noticed some remarkable similarities:

"They both have trouble memorizing their dialogue," he says, "and yet they're both spontaneous beyond reason. There's a real symbiosis that occurs between young children from the ages of six to eleven and older people from the ages of seventy to ninety. They both go back to a kind of natural daring—and that's what's wonderful about working with them." **17**



Late of *The Shining*, Indiana-born Scatman Crothers—who made his show-business debut as a singer-drummer-guitarist in local speakeasies at the age of fourteen—stars in the segment based on "Kick the Can," in which the inmates at an old-age home discover a miraculous way back to youth.





## V.C. Andrews & 'all those beautifully bizarre little things'

HER BESTSELLING GOTHICS ARE POPULATED  
BY CHILD-ABUSERS, PSYCHOPATHS,  
AND SADISTS. AND SHE HERSELF  
KNOWS A THING OR TWO ABOUT PAIN.

Interviewer Lorenzo Carcaterra reports:

The Dollanganger kids—Chris, Carrie, Cathy, and Carry. All fresh, all innocent, and all waiting for a revenge that they know will someday be theirs. For now, however, they sit in a damp, empty attic and wait. They wait not for days, but for years.

Such was the premise for a first novel written by a native of Portsmouth, Virginia, a woman named Virginia Cleo Andrews. The book was called *Flowers in the Attic* and has surprised everyone in publishing with a sales total that recently approached the three-and-a-half-million mark.

With this first novel, the lady from Virginia seemed on her way. And it came after a life of early promise: junior college art courses at the age of eight, scholarship at fifteen, fledgling career as a fashion illustrator and commercial artist in her twenties.

But it was also a life filled with pain: a bad fall from a flight of stairs, four major operations, a mediocre crew of doctors, arthritis, paralysis.

She wrote her second novel, *Petals on the Wind*, in much the same manner she had written her first: standing for

## V.C. Andrews

nearly twelve hours a day and writing until the numbness set in. The sale of that book totaled in the millions as well.

The Dollanganger saga continued in 1981 with *If There Be Thorns*. This book brought the total sales of the tragic trilogy past the eleven million mark.

Naw, with *My Sweet Audrina*, V.C. Andrews leaves the kids momentarily and heads for higher ground, still clutching, however, the safety ropes of romance, horror, incest, fear. Audrina is as troubled, as angry, as confused, and as crazed as are any of the Dollangangers. Like the kids, she tries to lead her own life, tries to escape the traps set on her by others but finds it all to be futile and damning.

The stories V.C. Andrews writes seem fitting for the woman she is and for the life she leads. Alone most of the day, she lives with her mother in Virginia Beach. Her life is dedicated to work, her work dedicated to the passing on of fear.

She dislikes interviews and doesn't hide the fact. She likes money and doesn't hide that either. She is a woman very conscious of the public perception: the Gothic Queen, lonely, sickly, distrustful of strangers, passing the time thinking up the latest in evil and dementia.

The midtown New York hotel room she was staying in was what when photographer Tam Tamasula and I entered. Andrews's mother greeted us and quickly disappeared to another room. A publicity man threw himself across the one bed, passively as tired of interviews as his client.

She looked straight at Tam and me, and in a voice of just the slightest Southern gentility, mixing nicely with our own urban paranoia, said: "I'll have my pictures taken standing up."

We smiled. She didn't. As much in person as in her novels, V.C. Andrews likes to keep people on edge, as far away from the truth, from the reality, as possible.

I stared at her, hoping for the slightest hint of warmth, of humanity. I was given nothing in return.

TZ: *My Sweet Audrina* is your first hardcover. Why the change from the original paperback form, where you were extremely successful, to a more expensive, riskier area of publishing? Andrews: It was purely my editor's decision. I would have been happier if all my books had come out in hardcover, rather than just the fourth one. I guess it just wasn't meant to be.

TZ: How difficult was it for you to get that first novel, *Flowers in the Attic*, published?

Andrews: It wasn't difficult at all after I had it written well. I wrote it in two weeks. By that time, however, I had been writing for seven years and had written nine unpublished novels. *Flowers* was the sixth one on that list, while *Petals on the Wind* was the seventh. I had no intention at all, at

Andrews: I don't think they fascinate me at all. I'm just telling a story about children and from their viewpoint. I can write about adults also.

TZ: Did you envision the *Flowers*, *Petals*, and *Thorns* saga as a trilogy, or did it just happen to evolve that way? Andrews: It evolved. *Flowers in the Attic* was one book and *Petals on the Wind* was its sequel, and that was to be it. But when the demand was so

*"Most critics are would-be writers who are just jealous because I'm getting published and they aren't."*

that point, to write *If There Be Thorns*.

I had submitted *Flowers* three times and almost had it sold once. That deal fell through because the publisher wanted me to switch to the third person and I just didn't think that would work. So I put it on a shelf and wrote something else.

I went back to it soon after that, because I felt it was just too good a book to be left sitting on a shelf collecting dust. I rewrote the whole book again, this time throwing in a whole lot more strange occurrences that weren't in the other versions. I guess it was those strange occurrences that sold the book. You know, all those beautifully bizarre little things.

TZ: Why did you choose to write in the horror genre to begin with?

Andrews: I don't think I write in the horror-type genre at all.

TZ: What do you see it as, then?

Andrews: Novels of portents, psychological thrillers. Anything, anything at all but horror. I don't even like the use of the word.

TZ: A large number of teenagers and pre-teens read your books. Are you concerned about the negative effects your writings may have on them?

Andrews: I always read scary books when I was a child and it didn't do anything to me. I didn't go out and kill anyone or torture anyone. Besides, the kind of violence you're talking about doesn't exist in my books. I write about situations that simply don't come up in our everyday lives. The kinds of situations that would be virtually impossible to imitate or duplicate.

TZ: What is it about children that so fascinates you?

huge and everybody was demanding to know what happened, the publisher asked me to do a third. I didn't really want to. I'd grown tired of the characters. Then he offered me a certain sum which I considered rather large, and I decided to do it.

TZ: Do you object at all to being labeled as a genre writer?

Andrews: Yes. But, again, I don't think I fall into any particular genre. Any genre I may fall into is my own, one that I've started myself. I don't think that I'm another Stephen King, nor do I want to be.

TZ: How good a writer are you when placed up against your contemporaries? Andrews: I don't think anybody else writes the same kind of stories I write in either the same style or with the same amount of substance. My books deal with realism, while some of the other writers tend to introduce the occult into their work. I don't go anywhere near that territory. Some of the people those other writers are writing about don't seem to me to be real, don't seem to be people at all, just creations. I'm a much better writer than that.

TZ: Is it unusual for a woman to be writing the kinds of books which you write?

Andrews: I don't think men write well about women—which makes what I do refreshing since I can bring it out from a woman's point of view. They write about women as they wish women were, not as they are. Women see themselves much more honestly than men see them. I don't write about men realistically, but only as I wish they were.

But, to answer your question, I

don't think it unusual for a woman to be writing the types of books I write. Different, maybe, but not unusual.

TZ: What do you think you do better than any other writer?

Andrews: I think I'm really strong at emotions. I can make people feel. Most of my fan letters usually say things like, "I didn't know a book could make me cry," or "that a book could make me feel more than a movie or a television show." People can become more involved in one of my books than in anything they could possibly see in their movie theaters or sitting in their living rooms. I don't think that there are many writers who can do that, bring out those emotions, as well as I can.

TZ: What don't you do well? What area of your writing needs the most work?

Andrews: My critics should be able to answer that one quite easily. I certainly can't answer it.

TZ: Is critical reaction important to the types of books that you do, since they seem to sell no matter what the critics say about them?

Andrews: I don't care what the critics say. I used to, until I found out that most critics are would-be writers who are just jealous because I'm getting published and they aren't. I also don't think that anybody cares about what they say. Nor should they care.

TZ: Do you have in your mind an idea of who exactly it is that buys your books? What kind of a person?

Andrews: Strangely enough, I get a lot of photographs in my mail from young girls who read my books. They're about fourteen, they wear glasses, most of them have long hair, and most look like the characters I've written about. Except for the glasses. My characters don't wear glasses.

TZ: Would you like to move your writing more into the mainstream, veering away from the work you now do on to something totally different?

Andrews: I'd love to.

TZ: What's stopping you?

Andrews: My editor. There's a lot of pressure placed on me to keep writing thrillers or chillers or whatever they are. I don't know how to describe them.

TZ: Is your day broken into any specific work pattern or set routine?

Andrews: No. I dress in the morning as if I were on my way to work. Then I go write, and I write until somebody tells me it's time to eat. If no one told

me to eat, I wouldn't eat. Then I go back and write some more and stop when someone calls me for dinner. After dinner I go back and write until I'm so tired that I have to quit. The next day, I start all over again.

When I'm writing, I find myself working day after day after day. It's my work, but it's also what I have the most fun doing.

TZ: How long does it take you to complete a novel?

Andrews: *My Sweet Audrina* took a little longer because I was learning to use a word processor. Once I learned to use the machine and not lose everything I was writing, it took about five months.

## Inside the Mind of a Psychopath . . .

"Now you be a good little girl and keep on playing with your rubber ducky and boat," said Emma to Cindy. "Emma will be right back."

My head lifted before I began to wiggle on my belly on the ground. The bra in the pool stood up and took off her bathing suit. Stark naked and bold she hurled her wet suit at me, then teased and laughed and tormented me with her bare flesh. Then, as if bored with my reaction, she sat again in the shallow water and stared down at herself with a secret little smile. Wicked! Shameless! Imagine her showing her private parts to me.

Mothers should treat their daughters how to act decent, proper, modest. My mother was just like Corrine, whom John Amos had said was weak and never punished her children enough. "Yes, Bart, your grandmother ruined her children, and now they live in sin and flaunt God and his moral rules!"

I guess it was up to me to teach Cindy a lesson about modesty and shame. Forward I wiggled. Now I had her attention. Her blue eyes opened wide. Her rosy full lips parted. At first she seemed happy that finally I was gonna play kiddy

TZ: Do you rewrite a great deal?

Andrews: Yes. I do about three or four drafts, starting with very short drafts and working my way up to novel-length ones.

TZ: Does the fact that you live a somewhat secluded life help or hinder your work?

Andrews: I don't think it matters where you live, so long as you have a place to be alone. I don't look out the window much when I write. I just stare at that screen and type out the words.

TZ: There is, however, an image of you being a reclusive person. How much of that is true?

Andrews: All my friends laugh at that image. I don't think I'm a recluse. I

games with her. Then, something wise put fright in her eyes. She froze and made me think of a timid rabbit scared by a vicious snake. Snake. Much better to be a snake than a cat. Snake in The Garden of Eden doing unto Eve what should have been done in the beginning. *Lo, said the Lord when he splotched Eve in her nakedness, go forth from Eden and let the world hurl their stones.*

Hissing and flicking my tongue in and out, I edged closer. Was the Lord who spoke and I who obeyed. Wicked mother who refused to punish had made me what I was, an evil snake willing to do the Lord's bidding, even if it wasn't my own way.

I tried to flatten my head with willpower and make it small, flat and reptilelike. Tears came to Cindy's huge, scared eyes, and she began to bawl as she tried to wiggle over the rounded rim of the wading pool. The water wasn't deep enough for a little girl to drown in, or else Emma wouldn't have left her alone.

But ... if a boa constrictor from Brazil was on the loose—what chance did a two-year-old have?

—from *If There Be Thorns* (1981)



just don't like to be bothered when I'm writing.

TZ: Why do you think people are still fascinated with the subject matter you choose to write about?

Andrews: I think there is something in all of us that just likes to be scared, something that takes you out of your own life. It gives you the feeling that, while things may be bad for you, they're much worse for the character you're reading about. You can then come back into your own life with a sense of relief. People love to be frightened. Many of my readers tell me they sit tense on the chair or sofa as they turn the pages. They love it.

TZ: Is the field you write in, thriller, horror, whatever, too cluttered, with far too many people writing the same kinds of books?

Andrews: I don't read those kinds of books, so I'm really not the one to ask. I know that only a few of the writers stand out, most of whom I don't like, but I don't think I should mention their names.

TZ: Did you begin writing novels using the initials V.C. to hide the fact that you're a woman, to give the books another touch of mystery?

Andrews: I wish I could say that was true, but it was strictly an editorial

would read all of my father's books. I read all the time. By the time I was seven years old, I had decided to become a writer. I just couldn't wait to sit down and write stories for people to read.

*"I don't think that I'm another Stephen King, nor do I want to be."*

decision. They didn't ask me for my opinion.

TZ: What is your opinion?

Andrews: My opinion is that I want my whole name on the book.

TZ: Very little is known about your childhood. Can you briefly tell me what kind of a childhood you had?

Andrews: In other words, did I have a miserable childhood?

TZ: Not necessarily. Just what were you like as a child?

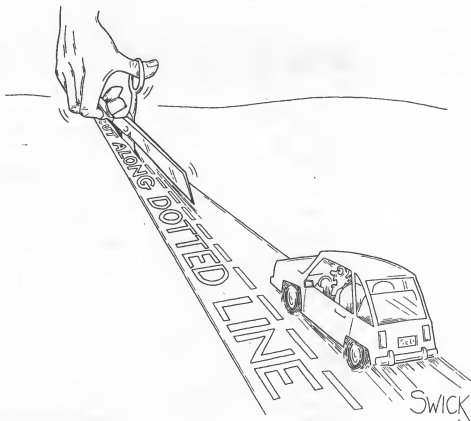
Andrews: I was someone who loved books. I read as many as the library would let me take home, and then I

TZ: You were an artist for a while, weren't you?

Andrews: Yes, but not a very successful one. I could barely eke out a living. I also was not very satisfied with the form, with the medium. I won quite a few awards, but I wasn't making any money.

TZ: How long have you been in a wheelchair? How long have you been paralyzed?

Andrews: Everyone seems to think I never leave this chair, but I do get out of it. I've been this way now for about ten years.



TZ: What caused it?

Andrews: I had a fall and in order to save myself from breaking my neck—I was falling down a flight of stairs—I twisted around and grabbed the banister. In so doing I tore the membrane and the long bone. The doctors didn't believe I was in any pain and kept sending me home. This caused the tear to heal improperly, and it led to my having arthritis. I was in such pain that for seven years I could hardly stand, let alone walk across the hall.

TZ: Do you think the accident you've had has in any way affected the way you look at life or the type of work you do?

Andrews: That's difficult to answer. How would I know unless I'd lived another kind of life? I suppose it's bound to; anything you experience affects the way you write.

TZ: Do you have another project lined up?

Andrews: I'm working on the fourth Dollanganger book.

TZ: Watch out!

Andrews: You better believe it. I've done five chapters thus far, and it's better than anything I've ever written. TZ: Do you need any special equipment to do your work?

Andrews: Not really. For years I used to stand up and write, because at the angle I'm sitting in the chair I can't see the type. I would have to tilt the typewriter. But now, with the word processor, I don't need to stand.

TZ: Does it hurt for you to work, to write?

Andrews: You don't know it hurts until you're finished. Then there's a great deal of pain. You never get used to the pain.

TZ: Does your paralysis further augment that image of you as the lonely, battered woman writing novels of death and doom?

Andrews: To the people who don't know me it does, and it may have helped sell a few more copies of my books than would normally have been sold. But to my friends, that's all one big joke.

TZ: What do you do to break from writing stories that scare most of the people who read them?

Andrews: I go shopping. I also love to play games—chess, backgammon, that sort of thing. I like movies and the ballet also, but mostly I shop and play games.


TZ: As a beginning writer, did you ever feel like giving up? Did you tire of the constant rejections?

Andrews: No. I was addicted to it. I was determined to be successful and I worked as hard as I could to be so. I would never have given up. Never. It's just not in me.

TZ: Do you enjoy this part of what has become the writer's job—selling the book?

Andrews: No. I see it totally as an invasion of privacy. Everyone seems to want to know all your deep dark secrets. Even you.

TZ: I haven't asked you about any of your secrets.

Andrews: No, but I'll bet you'd just love to. 

**"Doubles the national nightmare quotient!"\***

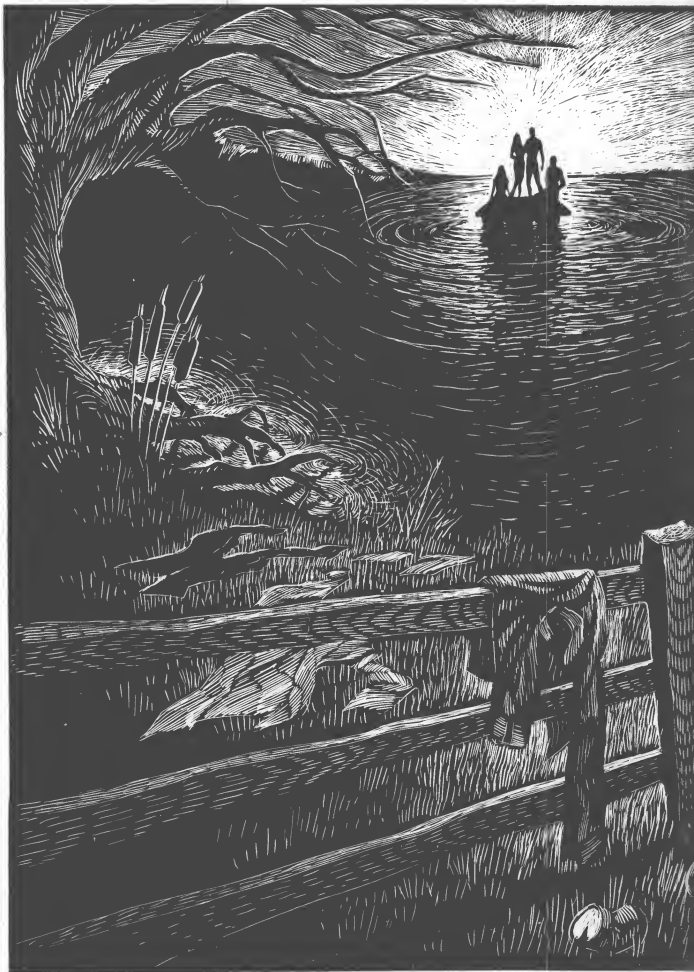
# FLOATING DRAGON

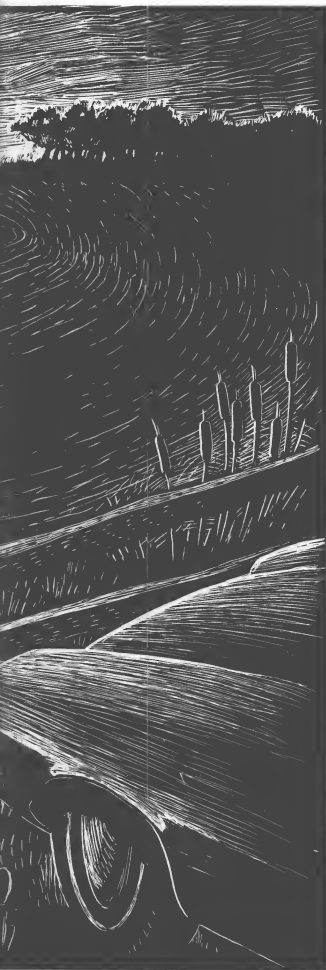
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# THE RAFT

by  
**STEPHEN  
KING**

THERE WERE FIVE OF THEM OUT  
THERE IN THE CHILL WATER:

TWO GIRLS, TWO BOYS . . .  
AND SOMETHING WORSE THAN  
THEIR DARKEST NIGHTMARES.  
WHAT FOLLOWS IS A TALE OF  
TOTAL, UNRELIEVED HORROR—  
DEFINITELY NOT FOR THE  
FAINT OF HEART.

**I**t was forty miles from Horlicks University in Pittsburgh to Cascade Lake, and although dark comes early to that part of the world in October, and although they didn't get going until six o'clock, there was still a little light in the sky when they got there. They had come in Deke's Camaro. Deke didn't waste any time when he was sober. After a couple of beers, he made that Camaro walk and talk.

He had hardly brought the car to a stop at the pole fence between the parking lot and the beach before he was out of the Camaro and pulling off his shirt. His eyes were scanning the water for the raft. Randy got out of the shotgun seat, a little reluctantly. This had been his idea, true enough; but he had never expected Deke to take it seriously. The girls were moving around in the back seat, getting ready to get out.

Deke's eyes scanned the water restlessly, side to side (*sniper's eyes*, Randy thought uncomfortably), and then fixed on a point.

"It's there!" he shouted, slapping the hood of the Camaro. "Just like you said, Randy! Last one in's a rotten egg!"

"Deke—" Randy began, resetting his glasses on his nose; but that was all he bothered with, because Deke was vaulting the fence and running down the beach, not looking back at Randy or Rachel or LaVerne, only looking out at the raft, which was anchored about fifty yards out on the lake.

Randy looked around, as if to apologize to the girls for getting them into this; but they were looking at Deke. Rachel looking at him was all right—Rachel was his girl—but LaVerne was looking at him too, and Randy felt a hot momentary spark of jealousy that got him moving. He peeled off his own sweat shirt, dropped it beside Deke's, and hopped over the fence.

"Randy!" LaVerne called, and he only pulled his arm forward through the gray twilight October air in a come-on gesture, hating himself a little for doing it. She was unsure now, perhaps ready to cry it off. The idea of an October swim in the deserted lake wasn't just part of a comfortable, well-lighted bull session in the apartment he and Deke shared anymore. He liked her, but Deke was stronger. And damned if she didn't have the hots for Deke, and damned if it wasn't irritating.

Deke unbuckled his jeans, still running, and pushed them off his lean hips. He somehow got out of them all the way without stopping, a feat Randy could not have duplicated in a thousand years. Deke ran on, now only wearing bikini briefs, the muscles in his back and buttocks working gorgeously. Randy was more than aware of his own skinny shanks as he dropped his Levis and clumsily shook them free of his feet. With Deke it was ballet; with him it was burlesque.

Deke hit the water and bellowed, "Cold! Mother of Jesus!"

Randy hesitated, but only in his mind, where things took longer. *That water's forty-five degrees, fifty at most*, his mind told him. *Your heart could stop*. He was pre-med; he knew that was true . . . but in the physical world he didn't hesitate at all. He leaped in, and for a moment his heart *did* stop, or seemed to; his breath clogged in his throat; and he had to force a gasp of air into his lungs as all his submerged skin went numb. *This is crazy*, he thought; and then, *But it was your idea, Pancho*. He began to stroke after Deke.

The two girls looked at each other for a moment. LaVerne shrugged and grinned. "If they can, we can," she said, stripping off her LaCoste shirt to reveal an almost transparent bra. "Aren't girls supposed to have an extra layer of fat?"

Then she was over the fence and running for the

water, unbuttoning her cords. After a moment Rachel followed her, much as Randy had followed Deke.

**T**he girls had come over to the apartment at mid-afternoon—on Tuesdays, a one o'clock was the latest class any of them had. Deke's monthly allotment had come in—one of the football-mad alumni (the players called them angels) saw that he got two hundred a month in cash—and there was a case of beer in the fridge and a new Triumph album on Randy's battered stereo. The four of them set about getting pleasantly oiled. After a while, the talk had turned to the end of the long Indian summer they had been enjoying. The radio was predicting flurries for Wednesday. (LaVerne had advanced the opinion that weathermen predicting snow flurries in October should be shot, and no one had disagreed.)

Rachel said that summers seemed to last forever when she was a girl; but now that she was an adult ("a doddering, senile, old nineteen," Deke joked, and she kicked his ankle), they got shorter every year. "It seemed like I spent my life out at Cascade Lake," she said, crossing the decayed kitchen linoleum to the ice-box. She peered in, found an Iron City Light hiding behind a stack of blue Tupperware storage boxes (the one in the middle contained some nearly prehistoric chili, which was now thickly festooned with mold; Randy was a good student and Deke was a good football player, but neither of them was worth a fart in a noise-maker when it came to housekeeping), and appropriated it. "I can still remember the first time I managed to swim all the way out to the raft. I sat there for damn near two hours, scared to swim back."

She sat down next to Deke, who put an arm around her. She smiled, remembering, and Randy suddenly thought she looked like someone famous or semi-famous. He couldn't quite place the resemblance. It would come to him later, under less pleasant circumstances.

"Finally, my brother had to swim out and tow me back on an inner tube. God, he was mad. And I had a sunburn like you wouldn't believe."

"The raft's still out there," Randy said, mainly just to say something. He was aware that LaVerne had been looking at Deke again; lately it seemed like she looked at Deke a lot.

But now she looked at him. "It's almost *Halloween*, Randy. Cascade Beach has been closed since Labor Day."

"Raft's still out there, though," Randy said. "We were on the other side of the lake on a geology field trip about three weeks ago and I saw it then. It looked like . . ." He shrugged. ". . . a little bit of summer that somebody forgot to clean up and put away in the closet until next year."

He thought they would laugh at that, but no one did—not even Deke.

**When he had first  
seen it,  
the patch had been  
maybe forty yards from  
the raft. Now it was  
only half that distance.**

"Just because it was there last year doesn't mean it's still there," LaVerne said.

"I mentioned it to a guy," Randy said, finishing his own beer. "Billy DeLois. Do you remember him, Deke?"

Deke nodded. "Played second-string until he got hurt."

"Yeah, him. Anyway, he comes from out that way, and he said the guys who own the beach never take it in until the lake's almost ready to freeze. Just lazy—at least, that's what he said. He said that some year they'd wait too long and it would get ice-locked."

He fell silent, remembering how the raft had looked, anchored out there on the lake—a square of bright white wood in all that bright blue autumn water. He remembered how the sound of the barrels under it—that buoyant *clunk-clunk* sound—had drifted up to them. The sound was soft, but sounds carried well on the still air around the lake. There had been that sound and the sound of crows squabbling over the remnants of some farmer's harvested garden.

"Snow tomorrow," Rachel said, getting up as Deke's hand wandered almost absently down to the upper swell of her breast. She went to the window and looked out. "What a bummer."

"I'll tell you what," Randy said, "let's go on out to Cascade Lake. We'll swim out to the raft, say good-bye to summer, and then swim back."

If he hadn't been half-loaded he never would have made the suggestion, and he certainly didn't expect anyone to take it seriously. But Deke jumped on it.

"All right!" he shouted, making LaVerne jump and spill her beer. But she smiled—the smile made Randy a little uneasy. "Let's do it!"

"Deke, you're crazy," Rachel said, also smiling—but her smile looked a little tentative, a little worried.

"No, I'm going to do it," Deke said, going for his coat; and, with a mixture of dismay and excitement, Randy noted Deke's grin—reckless and a little crazy. The two of them had been rooming together for three years now—the Jock and the Brain, Cisco and Pancho, Batman and Robin—and Randy recognized that grin. Deke wasn't kidding; he meant to do it.

Forget it, Cisco—not me. The words rose to his lips, but before he could say them LaVerne was on her

feet, the same cheerful, loony look in her eyes (or maybe it was just too much beer). "I'm up for it!" she shouted.

"Then let's go!" Deke looked at Randy. "What-choo say, Pancho?"

He had looked at Rachel for a moment then, and saw something almost frantic in her eyes—as far as he himself was concerned, Deke and LaVerne could go out to Cascade Lake together and plow the back forty all night. He would not be delighted with the knowledge that they were boffing each other's brain out, yet neither would he be surprised. But the look in her eyes, that haunted look—

"Oh, Ceescol!" he cried. He and Deke slapped palms.

**R**andy was halfway to the raft when he saw the black patch on the water. It was beyond the raft and to the left of it, more out toward the middle of the lake. Five minutes later, the light would have failed too much for him to tell if it was anything more than a shadow ... if he had seen it at all. *Oil slick?* he thought, still pulling hard through the water, faintly aware of the girls splashing behind him. *But what would an oil slick be doing on an October deserted lake? And it was oddly circular, small, surely no more than five feet in diameter—*

"Whooooo!" Deke shouted again, and Randy looked toward him. Deke was climbing the ladder on the side of the raft, shaking off water like a dog. "Howya doon, Pancho?"

"Okay!" he called back, pulling harder. It really wasn't as bad as he had thought it might be, not once you got in and got moving. His body tingled with warmth and now his motor was in overdrive. He could feel his heart putting out good revs, heating him from the inside out. His folks had a place on Cape Cod, and the water there was worse than this in mid-July.

"You think it's bad now, Pancho, wait'll you get out!" Deke yelled gleefully. He was hopping up and down, making the raft rock, rubbing his body.

Randy forgot about the oil slick until his hands actually grasped the rough, white-painted wood of the ladder on the shore side. Then he saw it again. It was a little closer. A round, dark patch on the water, like a big mole, rising and falling on the mild waves. When he had first seen it, the patch had been maybe forty yards from the raft. Now it was only half that distance.

*How can that be? How—*

Then he came out of the water and the cold air bit his skin, bit it even harder than the water had when he first died in it. "Ohhhhh, *shit!*" he yelled, laughing, shivering in his jockey shorts.

"Pancho, you arsehole," Deke said happily. He pulled Randy up. "Cold enough for you? You sober yet?"

"I'm sober! I'm sober!" He began to jump around as Deke had done, clapping his arms across his chest and stomach in an X. They turned to look at the girls.

Rachel had pulled ahead of LaVerne, who was doing something that looked like a dog paddle performed by a dog with bad instincts.

"You ladies okay?" Deke bellowed.

"Go to hell, Macho City!" LaVerne called, and Deke broke up again.

Randy glanced to the side and saw that odd circular patch was even closer—ten yards now, and still coming. It floated on the water, round and regular, like the top of a large steel drum; but the limber way it rode the swells made it clear that it was not the surface of a solid object. A sudden fear, directionless but powerful, seized him.

"Swim!" he shouted at the girls, and bent down to grasp Rachel's hand as she reached the ladder. He hauled her up. She bumped her knee hard—he heard the thud of her thinly clad flesh against wood.

"Ow! Hey! What—"

LaVerne was still ten feet away. Randy glanced to the side again and saw the round thing nuzzle the offside of the raft. The thing was as dark as oil, but he was sure it wasn't oil—it was too dark, too thick, too even.

"Randy, that hurt! What are you doing, being fun—"

"LaVerne! Swim!" Now it wasn't just fear; now it was terror.

LaVerne looked up, maybe not hearing the terror, but at least hearing the urgency. She looked puzzled, but she dog-paddled faster, closing the distance to the ladder.

"Randy, what's wrong with you?" Deke asked.

Randy looked to the side again and saw the thing fold itself around the raft's square corner. For a moment it looked like a Pac-Man image with its mouth open to eat electronic cookies. Then it slipped all the way around the corner and began to slide along the raft, one of its edges now straight.

"Help me get her up!" Randy grunted to Deke, and reached for her hand. "Quick!"

Deke shrugged good-naturedly and reached for LaVerne's other hand. They pulled her up and onto the raft's board surface bare seconds before the black thing slid by the ladder, its sides dimpling as it slipped past the ladder's uprights.

"Randy, have you gone crazy?" LaVerne was out of breath, a little frightened. Her nipples were clearly visible through the bra. They stood out in cold hard points.

"That thing," Randy said, pointing. "Deke? What is it?"

Deke spotted it. It had reached the left-hand corner of the raft. It drifted off a little to one side,

**"It went for the girls,"  
Randy said.**

**"Come on,  
Pancho. I thought you  
said you got sober."**

**"It went for the girls,"  
he repeated, stubbornly,  
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knows we're here.  
No one at all.**

reassuming its round shape. It simply floated there. The four of them looked at it.

"Oil slick, I guess," Deke said.

"You really racked my knee," Rachel said, glancing at the dark thing on the water and then back at Randy. "You—"

"It's not an oil slick," Randy said. "Did you ever see a round oil slick? That thing looks like a checker."

"I never saw an oil slick at all," Deke replied. He was talking to Randy but he was looking at LaVerne. LaVerne's panties were almost as transparent as her bra, the delta of her sex sculpted neatly in silk, each buttock a taut crescent. "I don't even believe in them. I'm from Missouri."

"I'm going to bruise," Rachel said, but the anger had gone out of her voice. She had seen Deke looking at LaVerne.

"God, I'm cold," LaVerne said. She shivered prettily.

"It went for the girls," Randy said.

"Come on, Pancho. I thought you said you got sober."

"It went for the girls," he repeated, stubbornly, and thought, *No one knows we're here. No one at all.*

"Have you ever seen an oil slick, Pancho?" He had put his arm around LaVerne's bare shoulders in the same almost-absent way that he had touched Rachel's breast earlier that day. He wasn't touching LaVerne's breast—not yet, anyway—but his hand was close. Randy found he didn't care much, one way or another. That black, circular patch on the water. He cared about that.

"I saw one on the Cape four years ago," he



expression felt inside.

"I'm afraid," Rachel said.

"Of an oil slick?" LaVerne asked incredulously, and then laughed. The urge to hit her swept over Randy again—to just swing a big roundhouse openhanded blow through the air, to wipe that look of half-assed hauteur from her face and leave a mark on her cheek that would bruise in the shape of a hand.

"Let's see you swim back, then," Randy said.

LaVerne smiled indulgently at him. "I'm not ready to go," she said, as if explaining to a child. She looked up at the sky, then at Deke. "I want to watch the stars come out."

Rachel was a short girl, pretty, but in a gamine, slightly insecure way that made Randy think of New York girls—hurrying to work in the morning, wearing their smartly tailored skirts with slits in the front or up one side, wearing that same look of slightly neurotic prettiness. Rachel's eyes always sparkled, but it was hard to tell if it was good cheer that lent them that lively look or just free-floating anxiety.

Deke's tastes usually ran more to tall girls with dark hair and sleepy sloe eyes, and Randy saw it was now over between Deke and Rachel—whatever there had been, something simple and maybe a little boring on his part, something deep and complicated and probably painful on hers. It was over, so cleanly and suddenly that Randy almost heard the snap: a sound like dry kindling broken over a knee.

He was a shy boy, but he moved next to Rachel now and put an arm around her. She glanced up at him briefly, her face unhappy but grateful for his gesture, and he was glad he had improved the situation for her a little. That similarity bobbed into his mind again. Something in her face, her looks . . .

He first associated it with tv game shows, then with commercials for crackers or wafers or some damn thing. It came to him then—she looked like Sandy Duncan, the actress who had played in the revival of *Peter Pan* on Broadway.

"What is that thing?" she asked. "Randy? What is it?"

"I don't know."

He glanced at Deke and saw Deke looking at him with that familiar smile that was more living familiarity than contempt . . . but the contempt was there, too. Maybe Deke didn't even know it, but it was. The expression said, *Here goes ol' worrywart Randy, pissing in his dities again*. It was supposed to make Randy mumble an addition—*It's probably nothing. Don't worry about it, it'll go away*. Something like that. He didn't. Let Deke smile. The black patch on the water scared him. That was the truth.

Rachel stepped away from Randy and knelt prettily on the corner of the raft closest to the thing, and for a moment she triggered an even clearer memory association: the girl on the White Rock soda

said. "We all pulled birds out of the surf and tried to clean them off—"

"Ecological, Pancho," Deke said approvingly. "Mucho ecological, I theenk."

Randy said, "It was just this big, sticky mess all over the water. In streaks and big smutches. It didn't look like that. It wasn't, you know, compact."

It looked like an accident, he wanted to say. *That thing doesn't look like an accident; it looks like it's on purpose.*

"I want to go back now," Rachel said. She was still looking at Deke and LaVerne, and Randy saw dull hurt in her face. He doubted if she knew it showed so clearly—on second thought, he doubted if she knew it was there at all.

"So go," LaVerne said. There was a look on her face—the clarity of absolute triumph, Randy thought, and if the thought seemed pretentious, it also seemed exactly right. The expression was not aimed precisely at Rachel . . . but neither was LaVerne trying to hide it from the other girl.

She moved a step closer to Deke; a step was all there was. Now their hips touched lightly. For one brief moment, Randy's attention passed from the thing floating on the water and focused with an almost exquisite hate on LaVerne. Although he had never hit a girl, in that one moment he could have hit her with real pleasure. Not because he loved her (he had been a little infatuated with her, yes, and more than a little horny for her, yes, and a lot jealous when she had begun to come on to Deke back at the apartment, oh yes, but he wouldn't have brought a girl he actually loved within fifteen miles of Deke), but because he knew that expression on Rachel's face—how that



labels. *Sandy Duncan on the White Rock labels*, his mind amended. Her hair, a close-cropped, slightly coarse blonde, lay wetly against her finely shaped skull. He could see goosebumps on her shoulder blades, above the white band of her bra.

"Don't fall in, Rache," LaVerne said with bright malice.

"Quit it, LaVerne," Deke said, still smiling.

Randy looked from them, standing in the middle of the raft with their arms loosely around each other's waist, hips touching lightly, and back at Rachel. Alarm raced down his spine and out through his nerves like fire. The black patch had halved the distance between it and the corner of the raft where Rachel was kneeling and looking at it. It had been six or eight feet away before. Now the distance was three feet or less. And he saw a strange look in her eyes, a round blankness that seemed queerly like the round blankness of the thing in the water.

Now it's *Sandy Duncan sitting on a White Rock label and pretending to be hypnotized by the rich, delicious flavor of Nabisco® Honey Grahams*, he thought idiotically, feeling his heart speed up as it had in the water, and he called out, "Get away from there, Rachel!"

Then everything happened very fast—things happened with the rapidity of fireworks going off. And yet he saw and heard each thing with perfect, hellish clarity. Each thing seemed caught in its own little capsule.

LaVerne laughed—on the quad in a bright afternoon hour it might have sounded like any college girl's laugh, but out here, in the growing dark, it sounded like the arid cackle of a witch making magic in a pot.

"Rachel, maybe you better get b—" Deke said, but she interrupted him, almost surely for the first time in her life, and indubitably for the last.

"It has colors!" she cried in a voice of utter, trembling wonder. Her eyes stared at the black patch on the water with blank rapture, and for just a moment Randy thought he saw what she was talking about—colors, yeah, colors, swirling in rich, inward-turning spirals. Then they were gone, and there was only dull, lusterless black again. "Such beautiful colors!"

"Rachel!"

She reached for it—out and down—her white arm, marbled with gooseflesh, her hand, held out to it, meaning to touch; he saw she had bitten her nails ragged.

"Ra—"

He sensed the raft tilt in the water as Deke moved toward them. He reached for Rachel at the same time, meaning to pull her back, dimly aware that he didn't want Deke to be the one to do it.

Then Rachel's hand touched the water—her forefinger only, sending out one delicate ripple in a ring—and the black patch surged over it. Randy heard

her gasp in air, and suddenly the blankness left her eyes. What replaced it was agony.

The black, viscous substance ran up her arm like mud . . . and under it; Randy saw her skin dissolving. She opened her mouth and screamed. At the same moment she began to tilt outward. She waved her other hand blindly at Randy and he grabbed for it. Their fingers brushed. Her eyes met his, and she still looked hellishly like Sandy Duncan. Then she fell clumsily outward and splashed into the water.

The black thing flowed over the spot where she had landed.

"What happened?" LaVerne was screaming behind them. "What happened? Did she fall in? What happened to her?"

Randy made as if to dive in after her and Deke pushed him backward with casual force. "No," he said in a frightened voice that was utterly unlike Deke.

All three of them saw her flail to the surface. Her arms came up, waving—no, not arms. One arm. The other was covered with a grotesque black membrane that hung in flaps and folds from something red and knitted with tendons, something that looked a little like a rolled roast of beef.

"Help!" Rachel screamed. Her eyes glared at them, away from them, at them, away—her eyes were like lanterns being waved aimlessly in the dark. She beat the water into a froth. "*Help it hurts please help it hurts IT HURTS IT HURRRRR—*"

Randy had fallen when Deke pushed him. Now he got up from the boards of the raft and stumbled forward again, unable to ignore that voice. He tried to jump in and Deke grabbed him, wrapping his big arms around Randy's thin chest.

"No, she's dead," he whispered harshly. "Christ, can't you see that? *She's dead, Pancho.*"

Thick blackness suddenly poured across Rachel's face like a drape, and her screams were first muffled and then cut off entirely. Now the black stuff seemed to bind her in crisscrossing ropes—or strands of spiderwebbing. Randy could see it sinking into her like acid, and when her jugular vein gave way in a dark, pumping jet, he saw the thing send out a pseudopod after the escaping blood. He could not believe what he was seeing, could not understand it . . . but there was no doubt, no sensation of losing his mind, no belief that he was dreaming or hallucinating.

LaVerne was screaming. Randy turned to look at her just in time to see her slap a hand melodramatically over her eyes like a silent movie heroine. He thought he would laugh and tell her this, but found he could not make a sound.

He looked back at Rachel. Rachel was almost not there anymore.

Her struggles had weakened to the point where they were really no more than spasms. The blackness oozed over her—*bigger now*, Randy thought, *it's*

**Thick blackness suddenly poured across Rachel's face like a drape, and her screams were first muffled and then cut off entirely.**

bigger, no question about it—with mute, muscular power. He saw her hand beat at it; saw the hand become stuck, as if in molasses or on flypaper; saw it consumed. Now there was a sense of her form only, not in the water but in the black thing, not turning but being turned, the form becoming less recognizable, a white flash—*bone*, he thought sickly, and turned away, vomiting helplessly over the side of the raft.

LaVerne was still screaming. Then there was a dull *whap!* She stopped screaming and began to snivel.

He hit her, Randy thought. *I was going to do that, remember?*

He stepped back, wiping his mouth, feeling weak and ill. And scared. So scared he could think with only one tiny wedge of his mind. Soon he would begin to scream himself. Then Deke would have to slap him, Deke wouldn't panic, oh no, Deke was hero material for sure. *You gotta be a football hero ... to get along with the beautiful girls*, his mind sang, cheerfully. Then he could hear Deke talking to him dimly, and he looked up at the sky, trying to clear his head, trying desperately to put away the vision of Rachel's form becoming blobbish and inhuman as that black thing ate her, not wanting Deke to slap him the way he had slapped LaVerne.

He looked up at the sky and saw the first stars shining up there—the shape of the Dipper already clear as the last white light faded out of the west. It was nearly seven-thirty.

"Oh, Ceeso," he managed. "We are in beeg trouble thees time, I theenk."

"What is it?" His hand fell on Randy's shoulder, gripping and twisting painfully. "It ate her, did you see that? It ate her, it fucking ate her up! What is it?"

"I don't know. Didn't you hear me before?"

"You're supposed to know, you're a fucking brain-ball, you take all the fucking science courses!" Now Deke was almost screaming himself, and that helped Randy get a little more control.

"There's nothing like that in any science book I ever read," Randy told him. "The last time I saw anything like that was the Halloween shock-show down at the Rialto when I was twelve."

The thing had regained its round shape now. It floated on the water ten feet from the raft.

"It's bigger," LaVerne moaned.

When Randy had first seen it, he had guessed its diameter at about five feet. Now it had to be at least eight feet across.

"It's bigger because it ate Rachel!" LaVerne cried, and began to scream again.

"Stop that or I'm going to break your jaw," Deke said, and she stopped—not all at once, but winding down the way a record does when somebody turns off the juice without taking the needle off the disc. Her eyes were huge things.

Deke looked back at Randy. "You all right, Pancho?"

"I don't know. I guess so."

"My man." Deke tried to smile, and Randy saw with some alarm that he was succeeding—was some part of Deke enjoying this? "You don't have any idea at all what it might be?"

Randy shook his head. Maybe it was an oil slick, after all ... or had been, until something had happened to it. Maybe cosmic rays had hit it in a certain way. Or maybe Arthur Godfrey had pissed atomic Bisquick all over it. Who knew? Who *could* know?

"Can we swim past it, do you think?" Deke persisted, shaking Randy's shoulder.

"No!" LaVerne shrieked.

"Stop it or I'm gonna smoke you, LaVerne," Deke said, raising his voice for the first time. "I'm not kidding."

"You saw how fast it took Rachel," Randy said.

"Maybe it was hungry then," Deke answered.

"But maybe now it's full."

Randy thought of Rachel kneeling there on the corner of the raft, so still and pretty in her bra and panties, and felt his gorge rise again.

"You try it," he said to Deke.

Deke grinned humorlessly. "Oh, Pancho."

"Oh, Ceeso."

"I want to go home," LaVerne said in a furtive whisper. "Okay?"

Neither of them replied.

"So we wait for it to go away," Deke said. "It came, it'll go away."

"Maybe," Randy said.

Deke looked at him, his face full of a fierce concentration in the gloom. "Maybe? What's this 'maybe' shit?"

"We came, and it came. I saw it come—like it smelled us. If it's full, like you say, it'll go. I guess. If it still wants chow—" he shrugged.

Deke stood thoughtfully, head bent. His short hair was still dripping a little.

"We wait," he said. "Let it eat fish."

Fifteen minutes passed. They didn't talk. It got colder. It was maybe fifty degrees and all three of them were in their underwear. After the first ten minutes, Randy could hear the brisk, intermit-

## THE RAFT

tent clickety-click of his teeth. LaVerne had tried to move next to Deke, but he pushed her away—gently but firmly enough.

"Let me be for now," he said.

So she sat down, arms crossed over her breasts, hands cupping her elbows, shivering. She looked at Randy, her eyes telling him he could come back, put his arm around her, it was okay now.

He looked away instead, back at the dark circle on the water. It just floated there, not coming any closer, but not going away, either. He looked toward the shore and there was the beach, a ghostly white crescent that seemed to float. The trees behind it made a dark, bulking horizon line. He thought he could see Deke's Camaro, but he wasn't sure.

"We just picked up and went," Deke said thoughtfully.

"That's right," Randy said.

"Didn't tell anyone."

"No."

"So no one knows we're here."

"No."

"Stop it!" LaVerne shouted. "Stop it, you're scaring me!"

"Shut your pie-hole," Deke said absently, and Randy laughed in spite of himself—no matter how many times Deke said that, it always slew him. "If we have to spend the night out here, we do. Somebody'll hear us yelling tomorrow. We're hardly in the middle of the Australian outback, are we, Randy?"

Randy said nothing.

"Are we?"

"You know where we are," Randy said. "You know as well as I do. We turned off Route Forty-one, we came up eight miles of back road—"

"Cottages every fifty feet—"

"Summer cottages. This is October. They're empty, the whole-fucking bunch of them. We got here and you had to drive around the damn gate, 'No trespassing' signs every fifty feet—"

"So? A caretaker—" Deke was sounding a little pissed now, a little off-balance. A little scared for the first time tonight, for the first time this month, this year, maybe for the first time in his whole life? Now there was an awesome thought—*Deke loses his fear-cherry*. Randy was not sure it was happening, but he thought maybe it was ... and he took a perverse pleasure in it.

"Nothing to steal, nothing to vandalize," he said. "If there's a caretaker, he probably pops by here on a bimonthly basis."

"Hunters—"

"Next month, yeah," Randy said, and shut his mouth with a snap. He had also succeeded in scaring himself.

"Maybe it'll leave us alone," LaVerne said. Her lips made a pathetic, loose smile. "Maybe it'll just ...

**"Did it go under?"  
LaVerne said, and there  
was something oddly  
nonchalant about her  
tone, as if she were trying  
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conversational, but  
she was screaming, too.  
"Did it go under the raft?  
Is it under us?"**

you know ... leave us alone."

Deke said, "Maybe pigs will—"

"It's moving," Randy said.

LaVerne leaped to her feet. Deke came to where Randy was and for a moment the raft tilted, scaring Randy's heart into a gallop and making LaVerne scream again. Then Deke stepped back a little and the raft stabilized, with the left front corner (as they faced the shoreline) dipped down slightly more than the rest of the raft.

It came with an oily, frightening speed, and as it did, Randy saw the colors Rachel had seen—fantastic reds and yellows and blues spiraling across an ebony surface like limp plastic or dark, lithe Naugahyde. It rose and fell with the waves and that changed the colors, made them swirl and blend. Randy realized he was going to fall over, fall right into it, he could feel himself tilting out ...

With the last of his strength he brought his right fist up his own nose—the gesture of a man stifling a cough, only a little high and a lot hard. His nose flared with pain, he felt blood run warmly down his face, and then he was able to step back, crying out, "Don't look at it! Deke! Don't look right at it, the colors make you loopy!"

"It's trying to get under the raft," Deke said grimly. "What's this shit, Cisco?"

Randy looked—he looked very carefully. He saw the thing nuzzling the side of the raft, flattening to a shape like half a pizza. For a moment it seemed to be piling up there, thickening, and he had an alarming vision of it piling up enough to run onto the surface of the raft.

Then it squeezed under. He thought he heard a



noise for a moment—a rough noise, like a roll of canvas being pulled through a narrow window—but that might have only been a creation of his overwrought nerves.

"Did it go under?" LaVerne said, and there was something oddly nonchalant about her tone, as if she were trying with all her might to be conversational, but she was screaming, too. "Did it go under the raft? Is it under us?"

"Yes," Deke said. He looked at Randy. "I'm going to swim for it right now," he said. "If it's under there I've got a good chance."

"No!" LaVerne screamed. "No, don't leave us here, don't—"

"I'm fast," Deke said, looking at Randy, ignoring LaVerne completely. "But I've got to go while it's under there."

Randy's mind felt as if it was whizzing along at Mach two or three—in a greasy, nauseating way it was exhilarating, like the last few seconds before you puke into the slipstream of a cheap carnival ride. There was time to hear the barrels under the raft clunking hollowly together, time to hear the leaves on the trees beyond the beach rattling dryly in a little puff of wind, time to wonder why it had gone under the raft.

"Yes," he said to Deke. "But I don't think you'll make it."

"I'll make it," Deke said, and started toward the edge of the raft.

He got two steps and then stopped.

His breath had been speeding up, his brain getting his heart and lungs ready to swim the fastest fifty yards of his life, and now his breath stopped like the rest of him, simply stopped in the middle of an inhale.

He turned his head, and Randy saw the cords in his neck stand out.

"Cisco?" he said in an amazed, choked voice, and then Deke began to scream.

He screamed with amazing force, great baritone bellows that splintered up toward wild soprano levels. They were loud enough to echo back from the shore in ghostly half notes. At first Randy thought he was just screaming, and then he realized it was a word—no, two words, the same two words over and over: "My foot!" Deke was screaming. "My foot! My foot! My foot!"

Randy looked down. Deke's foot had taken on an odd sunken look. The reason was obvious, but Randy's mind refused to accept it at first—it was too impossible, too insanely grotesque. As he watched, Deke's foot was being pulled down between two of the boards that made up the surface of the raft.

Then he saw the dark shine of the black thing beyond the heel and the toes of Deke's subtly deformed right foot, dark shine alive with swirling, malevolent colors.

The thing had his foot ("My foot!" Deke screamed, as if to confirm this elementary deduction. "My foot, oh my foot, my FOOOOOIT!"). He had stepped on one of the cracks between the boards (*step on a crack, break yer mother's back*, his mind gibbered wildly), and the thing had been down there. The thing had—

"Pull!" he screamed back suddenly. "Pull, Deke, Goddammit, PULL!"

"What's happening?" LaVerne hollered, and Randy realized dimly that she wasn't just shaking his shoulder; she had sunk her spade-shaped fingernails into him like claws. She was going to be absolutely no help at all. He drove an elbow into her stomach. She made a barking, coughing noise and sat down on her fanny. He leaped to Deke and grabbed one of Deke's arms.

It was hard as Carerra marble, every muscle standing out like the rib of a sculpted dinosaur skeleton. Pulling Deke was like trying to pull a big tree out of the ground by the roots. Deke's eyes were turned up toward the royal purple of the post-dusk sky, glazed and unbelieving, and still he screamed, screamed, screamed.

Randy looked down and saw that Deke's foot had now disappeared into the crack between the boards up to the ankle. That crack was perhaps only a quarter of an inch wide, surely no more than half an inch, but his foot had gone into it. Blood ran across the white boards in thick dark tendrils. Black stuff, like heated plastic, pulsed up and down in the crack, up and down, like a great black heart beating.

Got to get him out. Got to get him out quick or we're never gonna get him out at all. . . . Hold on, Cisco, please hold on. . . .

LaVerne got to her feet and backed away from the gnarled, screaming Deke-tree in the center of the raft which floated at anchor under the October stars on Cascade Lake. She was shaking her head numbly, her arms crossed over her belly where Randy's elbow had gotten her.

Deke leaned hard against him, arms groping stupidly. Randy looked down and saw blood gushing from Deke's shin, which now tapered the way a sharpened pencil tapers to a point—only the point here was white, not black—the point was a bone, barely visible.

The black stuff surged up again, sucking, eating. Deke wailed.

*Never going to play football on that foot again, what foot, ha-ha,* his mind blabbered, and he pulled Deke with all his might and it was still like pulling at a rooted tree.

Deke lurched again and now he uttered a long, drilling shriek that made Randy fall back, shrieking himself, hands covering his ears. Blood burst from the pores of Deke's calf and shin; his kneecap had taken on a purple, bulging look as it tried to absorb the tremendous pressure being put on it as the black thing hauled Deke's leg down through the narrow crack inch by agonizing inch.

*Can't help him. How strong it must be! Can't help him now. I'm sorry, Deke, so sorry—*

"Hold me, Randy," LaVerne yelled, clutching at him everywhere, digging her face into his chest. "Hold me, please, won't you hold me—"

This time, he did.

It was only later that a terrible realization came to Randy: The two of them could have almost surely swum ashore while the black thing was busy with Deke—and if LaVerne refused to try it, he could have done it himself. The keys to the Camaro were in Deke's jeans, lying on the beach. He could have done it ... but the realization that he could have never came to him until too late.

Deke died just as his thigh began to disappear into the narrow crack between the boards. He had stopped shrieking minutes before. Since then he had uttered only thick, syrupy grunts. Then those stopped, too. When he fainted, falling forward, Randy heard whatever remained of the femur in his right leg splinter in a greenstick fracture.

A moment later Deke raised his head, looked around groggily, and opened his mouth. Randy thought he meant to scream again. Instead, he voided a great jet of blood, so thick it was almost solid. Both Randy and LaVerne were splattered with its warmth and she began to scream again, hoarsely now.

"Oooog!" She cried, her face twisted in half-mad revulsion. "Oooog! Blood! Oooog, blood! Blood!" She rubbed at herself and only succeeded in smearing it around.

Blood was pouring from Deke's eyes, coming with such force that they had bugged out almost comically with the force of the hemorrhage. Randy thought, *Talk about vitality! Christ, look at that! He's like a goddamned human fire hydrant! God! God! God!*

Blood streamed from both of Deke's ears. His face was a hideous purple turnip, swelled shapeless with the hydrostatic pressure of some unbelievable reversal; it was the face of a man clutched in a bear hug of monstrous and unknowable force.

And then, suddenly, it was over.

Deke collapsed forward again, his hair hanging down on the raft's bloody boards, and Randy saw with sickish amazement that even Deke's scalp had bled.

Sounds from under the raft. Sucking sounds.

That was when it occurred to his tottering, overloaded mind that he could swim for it and stand a good chance of making it, while the thing was occupied with what remained of Deke. But LaVerne had gotten heavy in his arms, ominously heavy; he looked at her slack face, rolled back an eyelid to disclose only white, and knew that she had not fainted but fallen into what the Victorian doctors had called deep-swoon—a state of shock-unconsciousness.

Randy looked at the surface of the raft. He could lay her down, of course, but the boards were only a foot across. There was a diving board platform attached to the raft in the summertime, but that, at least, had been taken down and stored somewhere. Nothing left but the surface of the raft itself, fourteen boards, each a foot wide and twenty feet long. No way to put her down without laying her unconscious body across any number of those cracks.

*Step on a crack, break your mother's back.*

*Shut up.*

And then, tenebrously, his mind whispered, *Do it anyway. Put her down and swim for it.*

But he did not, could not. An awful guilt rose in him at the thought. He held her, feeling the soft, steady drag on his arms and back. She was a big girl.

**D**eke went down. Randy held LaVerne in his aching arms and watched it happen. He did not want to, and for long seconds that might even have been minutes, he turned his face away entirely; but his eyes always wandered back.

With Deke dead, it seemed to go faster.

The rest of his right leg disappeared, his left leg stretching out further and further until Deke looked like a one-legged ballet dancer doing an impossible split. There was the wishbone crack of his pelvis, and then, as Deke's stomach began to swell ominously with new pressure, Randy looked away for a long time, trying not to hear the wet sounds, trying to concentrate on the pain in his arms. He could maybe bring her

**He was just in time  
to see Deke's fingers  
being pulled down.  
It looked to Randy as if  
Deke was waving to him.  
Waving goodbye.**

around, he thought, but for the time being it was better to have the throbbing pain in his arms and shoulders. It gave him something to think about.

From behind him came a sound like strong teeth crunching up a mouthful of candy jawbreakers. When he looked back, Deke's ribs were collapsing into the crack. His arms were up and out, and he looked like an obscene parody of Richard Nixon giving the V-for-victory sign that had driven demonstrators wild in the sixties and seventies.

His eyes were open. His tongue had popped out at Randy.

Randy looked away again, out across the lake. *Look for lights*, he told himself. He knew there were no lights over there, but he told himself that anyway. *Look for lights over there, somebody's got to be staying the week in his place, fall foliage, shouldn't miss it, bring your Nikon, folks back home are going to love the slides.*

When he looked back, Deke's arms were straight up. He wasn't Nixon anymore; now he was a football ref signaling that the extra point had been good.

Deke's head appeared to be sitting on the boards.

His eyes were still open.

His tongue was still sticking out.

"Oh, Ceasco," Randy muttered, and looked away again. His arms and shoulders were shrieking now, but still he held her in his arms. He looked at the far side of the lake. The far side of the lake was dark. Stars spilled across the black sky, a spill of cold milk somehow suspended high in the air.

Minutes passed. *He'll be gone now. You can look now. Okay, yeah, all right. But don't look. Just to be safe, don't look. Agreed? Agreed. Most definitely.*

So he looked anyway and was just in time to see Deke's fingers being pulled down. They were moving—probably the motion of the water under the raft was being transmitted to the unknowable thing which had caught Deke, and that motion was then being transmitted to Deke's fingers. Probably, probably. But it looked to Randy as if Deke was waving to him. Waving goodbye. For the first time he felt his mind give a sickening sideways wrench—it seemed to cant the way the raft itself had canted when all four of them

had stood on the same side. It righted itself, but Randy suddenly understood that madness—real lunacy—was perhaps not as far away as he had thought.

Deke's football ring—All-Conference, 1981—slid slowly up the third finger of his right hand. The starlight rimmed the gold, played in the minute gutters between the engraved numbers, 19 on one side of the reddish stone, 81 on the other. The ring slid off his finger. The ring was a little too big to fit down through the crack, and, of course, it wouldn't squeeze.

It lay there. It was all that was left of Deke now. Deke was gone. No more dark-haired girls with sloe eyes, no more flicking Randy's bare rump with a wet towel when Randy came out of the shower, no more breakaway runs from midfield with fans rising to their feet in the bleachers and cheerleaders turning hysterical cartwheels along the sidelines. No more fast rides after dark in the Camaro with Thin Lizzy blaring out of the tape deck. No more Cisco Kid.

There was that faint rasping noise again—a roll of canvas being pulled slowly through a slit of a window.

Randy was standing with his bare feet on the boards. He looked down and saw the cracks on either side of both feet suddenly filled with slick darkness. His eyes bulged. He thought of the way the blood had come spraying from Deke's mouth in an almost solid rope, the way Deke's eyes had bugged out as if on springs as hemorrhages caused by hydrostatic pressure pulped his brain.

*It smells me. It knows I'm here. Can it come up? Can it get up through the cracks? Can it? Can it?*

He stared down, unaware of LaVerne's limp weight now, fascinated by the enormity of the question, wondering what the stuff would feel like when it flowed over his feet, when it hooked into him.

The black shininess humped up almost to the edge of the cracks (Randy rose on tiptoes without being at all aware he was doing it), and then it went down. That canvasy slithering resumed. And suddenly Randy saw it on the water again, a great dark mole, now perhaps fifteen feet across. It rose and fell with the mild wavelets, rose and fell, rose and fell, and when Randy began to see the colors pulsing evenly across it, he tore his eyes away.

He put LaVerne down, and as soon as his muscles unlocked, his arms began to shake wildly. He let them shake. He knelt beside her, her hair spread across the white boards in an irregular dark fan. He knelt and watched that dark mole on the water, ready to yank her up again if it showed any signs of moving.

He began to slap her lightly, first one cheek and then the other, back and forth, like a second trying to bring a fighter around. LaVerne didn't want to come around. LaVerne did not want to pass Go and collect two hundred dollars. LaVerne had seen enough. But Randy couldn't guard her all night, lifting her like a canvas sack every time that thing moved (and you couldn't

## THE RAFT

look at the thing too long; that was another thing).

He had learned a trick, though. He hadn't learned it in college. He had learned it from a friend of his older brother's. This friend had been a paramedic in Nam, and he knew all sorts of tricks—how to catch head lice off a human scalp and make them race in a match box, how to cut cocaine with baby laxative, how to sew up deep cuts with ordinary needle and thread. One day they had been talking about ways to bring abysmally drunken folks around so these abysmally drunken people wouldn't puke down their own throats and die, as Bon Scott, the leader of AC/DC, had done.

"You want to bring someone around in a hurry?" the friend with the catalogue of interesting tricks had said. "Try this." And he told Randy the trick which Randy now used.

He leaned over and bit LaVerne's earlobe as hard as he could.

Hot, bitter blood squirted into his mouth. LaVerne's eyelids flew up like window shades. She screamed in a hoarse, growling voice and struck out at him. Randy looked up and saw the far side of the thing only; the rest of it was already under the raft. It had moved with eerie, horrible, silent speed.

He jerked LaVerne up again, his muscles screaming protest, trying to knot into charley horses. She was beating at his face. One of her hands struck his sensitive nose and he saw red stars.

"Quit it!" he shouted, shuffling his feet onto the boards. "Quit it, you bitch, it's under us again, quit it or I'll fucking drop you, I swear to God I will!"

Her arms immediately stopped flailing at him and closed quietly around his neck in a deadly, convulsive drowner's grip. Her eyes looked white in the swimming starlight.

"Stop it!" She didn't. "Stop it, LaVerne, you're choking me!"

Tighter. Panic flared in his mind. The hollow clunk of the barrels had taken on a duller, muffled note—it was the thing underneath, he supposed.

"I can't breathe!"

The hold loosened a little.

"Now listen. I'm going to put you down. It's all right if you—"

But *put you down* was all she had heard. Her arms tightened in that deadly grip again. His right hand was on her back. He hooked it into a claw and raked at her. She kicked her legs, mewling harshly, and for a moment he almost lost his balance. She felt it. Fright rather than pain made her stop struggling.

"Stand on the boards."

"No!" Her air puffed hot and frantic against his cheek.

"It can't get you if you stand on the boards."

"No, don't put me down, it'll get me, I know it will, I know—"

Randy had forgotten  
to strip off his watch  
when he ran into the water,  
and now he marked off  
fifteen minutes.

At quarter past eight,  
the black thing slid out  
from under the raft again.  
It drew about fifteen feet off  
and then stopped  
as it had before.

He raked at her back again. She screamed in anger and pain and fear. "You get down or I'll drop you, LaVerne."

He lowered her slowly and carefully, both of them breathing in sharp little whines—oboe and flute. Her feet touched the boards. She jerked her legs up as if the boards were hot.

"Put them down!" he hissed at her. "I'm not Deke, I can't hold you all night!"

"Deke—"

"Dead."

Her feet touched the boards. Little by little he let go of her. They faced each other like dancers. He could see her waiting for its first touch. Her mouth gaped like the mouth of a goldfish.

"Randy," she whispered. "Where is it?"

"Under. Look down."

She did. He did. They saw the blackness stuffing the cracks, stuffing them almost all the way across the raft now. Randy sensed its eagerness, and thought she did, too.

"Randy, please—"

"Shhhh."

They stood there.

Randy had forgotten to strip off his watch when he ran into the water, and now he marked off fifteen minutes. At quarter past eight, the black thing slid out from under the raft again. It drew about fifteen feet off and then stopped as it had before.

"I'm going to sit down," he said.

"No!"

"I'm tired," he said. "I'm going to sit down and you're going to watch it. Just remember to keep looking away. Then I'll get up and you sit down. We go



like that. Here." He gave her his watch. "Fifteen minutes."

"It ate Deke," she whispered.

"Yes."

"What is it?"

"I don't know."

"I'm cold."

"Me too."

"Hold me, then."

"I've held you enough."

She subsided then.

Sitting down was heaven; not having to watch the thing was bliss. He watched LaVerne instead, making sure that her eyes kept shifting away from the thing on the water.

"What are we going to do, Randy?"

He thought.

"Wait," he said.

At the end of fifteen minutes he stood up and let her first sit and then lie down for half an hour. Then he got her on her feet again and she stood for fifteen minutes. They went back and forth. At quarter of ten, a cold rind of moon rose and beat a path across the water. At ten-thirty, a shrill, lonely cry rose, echoing across the water, and LaVerne shrieked.

"Shut up," he said. "It's just a loon."

"I'm freezing, Randy—I'm numb all over."

"I can't do anything about it."

"Hold me," she said. "You've got to. We'll hold each other. We can both sit down and watch it together."

He debated, but the cold sinking into his own flesh was now bone-deep, and that decided him. "Okay."

They sat together, arms wrapped around each

other, and something happened—natural or perverse, it happened. He felt himself stiffening. One of his hands found her breast, cupped in damp nylon, and squeezed. She made a sighing noise, and her hand stole to the crotch of his underpants.

He slid his other hand down and found a place where there was some heat. He pushed her down on her back.

"No," she said, but the hand in his crotch began to move faster.

"I can see it," he said. His heartbeat had sped up again, pushing blood faster, pushing warmth toward the surface of his chilled bare skin. "I can watch it."

She murmured something, and he felt elastic slide down his hips to his upper thighs. He watched it. He slid upward, forward, into her. Warmth. God, she was warm there, at least. She made a guttural noise and her fingers grabbed at his cold, clenched buttocks.

He watched it. It wasn't moving. He watched it. He watched it closely. The tactile sensations were incredible, fantastic. He was not experienced, but neither was he a virgin; he had made love with three girls and it had never been like this. She moaned and began to lift her hips. The raft rocked gently, like the world's hardest water bed. The barrels underneath murmured hollowly.

He watched it. The colors began to swirl—slowly now, sensuously, not threatening; he watched it and he watched the colors. His eyes were wide. The colors were in his eyes. He wasn't cold now; he was hot now, hot the way you got your first day back on the beach in early June, when you could feel the sun tightening your winter-white skin, reddening it, giving it some

(colors)

color, some tint. First day at the beach, first day of summer, drag out the Beach Boys oldies, drag out the Ramones, the Ramones telling you that you can hitch a ride to Rockaway Beach, the sand, the beach, the colors

(moving, it's starting to move)

and the feel of summer, the texture; Gary U.S. Bonds, school is out and I can root for the Yankees from the bleachers, girls in bikinis on the beach, the beach, the beach, firm breasts fragrant with Copper-tone oil, and if the bottom of the bikini was small enough you might see some

(hair her hair HER HAIR IS IN THE OH GOD IN THE WATER HER HAIR)

He pulled back suddenly, trying to pull her up, but the thing moved with oily speed and tangled itself in her hair like a webbing of thick black glue, and when he pulled her up she was already screaming and she was heavy with it; it came out of the water in a twisting, gruesome membrane that roiled with flaring colors—scarlet-vermilion, flaring emerald, sullen ochre.



## THE RAFT

It flowed down over LaVerne's face in a tide, obliterating it.

Her feet kicked and drummed. The thing twisted and moved where her face had been. Blood ran down her neck in streams. Screaming, not hearing himself scream, Randy ran at her, put his foot against her hip, and shoved. She went flopping and tumbling over the side, her legs like alabaster in the moonlight. For a few endless moments the water frothed and splashed against the side of the raft, as if someone had hooked the world's largest bass in there and it was fighting like hell.

Randy screamed. He screamed. And then, for variety, he screamed some more.

Some half an hour later, long after the frantic splashing and struggling had ended, the loons began to scream back.

That night was forever.

**T**he sky began to lighten in the east around quarter to five, and he felt a sluggish rise in his spirit. It was momentary, as false as the dawn. He stood on the boards, his eyes half closed, his chin on his chest. He had been sitting on the boards until an hour ago, and had been suddenly awakened—without even knowing until then that he had fallen asleep, that was the scary part—by that unspeakable hissing-canvas sound. He leaped to his feet bare seconds before the blackness began to suck eagerly for him between the boards. His breath whined in and out; he bit at his lip, making it bleed.

*Asleep, you were asleep, you asshole!*

The thing had oozed out from under again half an hour later, but he hadn't sat down again. He was afraid to sit down, afraid he would go to sleep and that this time his mind wouldn't trip him awake in time.

His feet were still planted squarely on the boards as a stronger light, real dawn this time, filled the east and the first morning birds began to sing. The sun came up, and by six o'clock the day was bright enough for him to be able to see the beach. Deke's Camaro, bright yellow, was right where Deke had parked it, nose into the pole fence. A bright litter of shirts and sweaters and four pairs of jeans were twisted into little shapes along the beach. The sight of them filled him with fresh horror when he thought his capacity for horror must surely have been exhausted. He could see his jeans, one leg pulled inside out, the pocket showing. His jeans looked so safe lying there on the sand, just waiting for him to come along and pull the inside out leg back through so it was right, grasping the pocket as he did, so the change wouldn't fall out. He could almost feel them whispering up his legs, could feel himself buttoning the brass button above the fly—

He looked left and there it was—black, round as a checker, floating lightly. Colors began to swirl

across its hide and he looked away quickly.

"Go home," he croaked. "Go home or go to California and find a Roger Corman movie to audition for."

A plane droned somewhere far away, and he fell into a dozing fantasy: *We are reported missing, the four of us. The search spreads outward from Horlicks. A farmer remembers being passed by a yellow Camaro "going like a bat out of hell." The search centers in the Cascade Lake area. Private pilots volunteer to do a quick aerial search, and one guy, buzzing the lake in his Beechcraft Twin Bonanza, sees a kid standing naked on the raft, one kid, one survivor, one—*

He caught himself on the edge of toppling over and brought his fist into his nose again, screaming at the pain.

The black thing arrowed at the raft immediately and squeezed underneath—it could hear, perhaps, or sense... or something.

Randy waited.

This time it was forty-five minutes before it came out.

**A**fternoon.  
Randy was crying.

He was crying because something new had been added now—every time he tried to sit down, the thing slid under the raft. It wasn't entirely stupid, then; it had either sensed or figured out that it could get him while he was sitting down.

"Go away," Randy wept at the great black mole floating on the water. Fifty yards away, mockingly close, a squirrel was scampering back and forth on the hood of Deke's Camaro. "Go away, please, go anywhere, but leave me alone...."

The thing didn't move. Colors began to swirl across its visible surface. Randy tore his eyes away and looked at the beach, looked for rescue, but there was no one there, no one at all. His jeans still lay there, one leg inside out, the white lining of one pocket showing. They no longer looked to him as if someone was going to pick them up. They looked like relics.

He thought: *If I had a gun, I would kill myself now.*

He stood on the raft.

The sun went down.

Three hours later, the moon came up.

Not long after that, the loons began to scream.

Not long after that, Randy turned and looked at the black thing on the water. He could not kill himself, but perhaps the thing could fix it so there was no pain—perhaps that was what the colors were for.

He looked for it and it was there, floating, riding the waves.

"Show me something pretty," Randy croaked.

The colors began to form and twist. This time Randy did not look away. Somewhere, far across the empty lake, a loon screamed. **17**

# ANSWERS TO FANTASY ACROSTIC #1

(page 22)

"The most merciful thing in the world, I think,  
is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents.  
We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity,  
and it was not meant that we should voyage far."

—[H. P.] Lovecraft, *The Call of Cthulhu*

A. LADYFINGER B. OTRANTO (Lovecraft held a low opinion of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), the first gothic novel, calling it "flat, stilted, and altogether devoid of the true cosmic horror which makes real literature.") C. VOIDED D. EIDOLON (The quoted sentence is from Lovecraft's "The Outsider.") E. CIMMERIAN (A friend through correspondence, Lovecraft was a great admirer of Robert E. Howard, creator of Conan.) F. ROWE G. ATTAIN H. FISTICUFFS (Lovecraft had a hand in "The Battle that Ended the Century," an in-joke spoof by his young disciple Robert Barlow.) I. TINTED J. THINK TANK K. HODGSON (Lovecraft hailed William Hope Hodgson as "perhaps second only to Algernon Blackwood in his serious treatment of unreality.") L. ELDRITCH (A pet ad-

jective of Lovecraft's, this example appears in his "The Unnamable.") M. CHASTITY (A virtue of which Lovecraft approved and—apart from the period of his brief marriage—practiced.) N. ALCHEMIST (One of Lovecraft's earliest stories was entitled "The Alchemist.") O. LAST TEST (Lovecraft revised this tale.) P. LOVEMAN (Samuel Loveman was a friend of Lovecraft's during his New York sojourn.) Q. OINTMENT R. FINIAL (The quoted passage is from Lovecraft's "The Haunter of the Dark.") S. CHAIN SAW T. TIFFANY U. HALLOWEEN V. USHER (Lovecraft considered "The Fall of the House of Usher" "Poe's supreme tale—and perhaps the supreme weird tale of all the ages.") W. LATIN PIG X. HOBBIT Y. UNWHOLESOME (Another adjective that recurs in Lovecraft's fiction.)

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*Tim Burton's  
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Ray Bradbury's  
*Something Wicked  
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RAY BRADBURY'S MAGICAL NOVEL  
 IS AT LAST ON FILM—WITH A LITTLE  
 HELP FROM THE MAGIC OF SPECIAL  
 EFFECTS. ED NAHA CHRONICLES  
 THE THREE-MILLION-DOLLAR FACELIFT.

**E**ighteen months ago, when production began on Walt Disney Studios' version of *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, hopes were high that this would be the first faithful adaptation of a Bradbury work to hit the screen. Bradbury himself had authored the script, and director Jack Clayton (*The Innocents*, *The Great Gatsby*) was taking great pains to come up with visuals that would do the words justice. Eye-boggling sets were constructed on the Disney lot. Press releases were handed out. A Christmas 1982 release was promised. And then...

Something strange happened to *Something Wicked*.

Now slated to appear in May, *Something Wicked This Way Comes* is not the movie Disney intended to make back in 1981. "It's a lot better," says director of special effects/associate producer Lee Dyer. "We've captured the essence of the book and retranslated it into visual terms."

During the past ten months, the movie has undergone some drastic overhauling to the tune of three million dollars. The process began last June when Dyer was asked to view a rough cut of Clayton's film by studio execs who felt it to be weak in spots. Dyer agreed with the honchos, although he hastens to add, "Jack Clayton was short-changed on this movie from the beginning. There were a lot of projects getting more attention than his. EPCOT [Disney's futuristic community in Florida] was the number-one priority around here. Then there was *Tron*, on which I was effects supervisor. As a result of all this other activity, there was no one around to work on effects for *Something Wicked*."

After Dyer saw the floundering film, he made pages of notes suggesting where effects sequences could be added to strengthen its clout. He also figured out ways to spruce up existing scenes, adding, in all, some twenty minutes of new footage.

"We used whatever techniques we felt would strengthen the story. The first sequence I developed employed spiders. I hate spiders. They scare the heck out

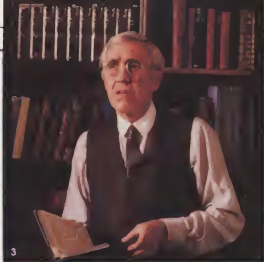
of me. I used them to heighten the power of the carnival's Dust Witch. In the book, the witch seeks out the boys in a fairly traditional way. I came up with the idea that she could send her essence to the boys' homes in the form of ectoplasm. Once there, she'd transform herself into an army of spiders. We used two hundred live tarantulas, four hundred fake ones, and six mechanical models. I'm still not over my fear of spiders, but I love that scene.

"You know," Dyer adds, "scaring audiences is nothing new here. The studio has been doing it since *Snow White*, if you think about it. We've simply taken that sense of fantasy fright and done it with live action."

After restaging a few more scenes, Dyer moved on to one of the movie's most startling sequences. "We show the carnival completely resurrecting itself without the use of human hands, in a combination of very advanced computer animation and hand-painted animation. It's the first time a computer has been used to animate organic material." In this scene, the carnival materializes out of the smoke from a passing train and takes form by using objects in an open field as a foundation. Train smoke becomes ropes and canvas tents. Tree limbs grow together to form a ferris wheel and a spider web mutates into a wheel of fortune.

Yet another high point called for the carnival to be sucked up into a churning storm. For that effect, a detailed miniature was suspended upside down twenty feet above a cloud tank. "I showed that sequence to Jack last week," beams Dyer, "and he just fell over. We built the largest cloud tank in existence, and our storm is really something to see, bursting with lightning and energy effects. In fact, we've redone the movie to the point where, as the story progresses, our storm becomes one of the stars. It's the 'good' entity in the movie, an ever-present force, almost godlike. If Mr. Dark is the devil, then our storm is the force of light."

Aside from generating completely new effects scenes,



Dyer's gang went back to existing scenes and added hand-generated animation techniques to underscore their power.

"There was a point where Mr. Dark was trapped on his carousel, his foot caught on a stirrup, that made no sense to me," says Dyer. "If Mr. Dark is a power to be reckoned with, he could easily have gotten out of that fix. So we added a bit where lightning strikes the carousel. It completely energizes the structure. Electricity surges through everything. The horses snort sparks. Now Dark is still trapped on the carousel, but he's held there by an overwhelming wave of energy."

In another episode, Halloway is cornered by Dark in a library and tempted with the promise of a second childhood. "Dark begins ripping pages out of a book," says Dyer. "Each torn page represents a slice of Halloway's youth lost to him. After this page is torn, you can no longer be twenty. After this page, you lose twenty-five."

"We've added animation to heighten the drama. When each page is torn out, there's a blast of fiery light. The page is red hot, cooling off only when it hits the floor. With each blast, we added interactive lighting to Dark's face, making him look even more demonic. The light also reflects off Halloway and the books around him. Finally, when Dark throws the book at Halloway, the entire library is illuminated by a flash of light."

"It touches like this that add to the magic. When I first started working on that scene, Ray Bradbury was worried that we'd ruin it. When he saw the finished effects, he had one word for us: 'fantastic.'"

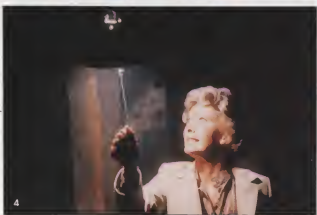
Dyer feels the extra work has paid off. "I showed the spider sequence to six women from the studio last week," he says. "One nearly fainted. One almost threw up. One had her knees up to her chest—and that was an elderly lady!"

"On the way out, one of the women turned to me and said, 'I can't believe this is a Disney film!'" A wicked laugh escapes Dyer's lips. "That's probably the biggest compliment anyone could pay me!"



1. Lightning rod salesman Tom Fury (Royal Dano) warns young Jim Nightshade and Will Halloway (Shawn Carson and Vidal I. Peterson) of a coming storm. Throughout Ray Bradbury's novel lightning is an ever-present threat to the carnival, revealing its true nature.
2. Bradbury poses before a miniature of the Pandemonium Carnival. A life-size carnival was built on a two-acre set nearby.
3. Jason Robards plays troubled small-town librarian Charles Halloway, whose relations with his son Will are clouded by a long-ago act of cowardice.
4. Sneaking into the carousel to spy on Mr. Dark (Jonathan Pryce), the boys are discovered by him and his assistant, Mr. Coogor (Bruce Fischer)—and, to their surprise, are offered free tickets to return.
5. Associate producer Lee Dyer and director Jack Clayton study the Mirror Maze, in which Will Halloway is trapped.
6. Mechanical-effects designer Isidoro Raponi (*Close Encounters*) displays a box of fake tarantulas he built to augment the two hundred live ones used in a "Dust Witch" sequence.





# Psycho II

AMERICA'S FAVORITE MOTEL-KEEPER IS BACK, AND HE'S JUST AS ODD AS EVER. JAMES VERNIERE TALKS TO DIRECTOR RICHARD FRANKLIN, THE MAN WHO'S SET NORMAN BATES FREE.

**F**or many, the thought of a sequel to *Psycho*, Alfred Hitchcock's trend-setting 1960 classic that has become part of the collective unconscious of an entire generation of filmgoers, is tantamount to sacrilege. But it is coming (tentatively in May), and it's coming in the wake of a flood tide of sequels that are presently ready for release or in development—films such as *Superman III*, *Supergirl I*, *Amityville 3-D*, *Sting II*, *Star Trek III*, *Halloween IV*, *Jaws 3-D*, and *Conan II*.

Yet *Psycho II* is unique. It's been twenty-two years since Janet Leigh took her fateful shower, and Norman Bates has been languishing in a mental asylum ever since. What would happen, thought the filmmakers, if Norman were pronounced cured and returned to his motel? Would he take a shower? Buy a dress? Kill again?

The task of directing *Psycho II*—a formidable one given the classic status of its predecessor—was handed over to Australian filmmaker Richard Franklin (*Patrick, Road Games*), a 1969 graduate of the USC film school where he studied beside classmates like Randal Kleiser (*Blue Lagoon*) and John Carpenter (*Halloween*). Not so coincidentally, Franklin is an ardent admirer of Hitchcock, and as a student he arranged retrospectives of Hitchcock's films and established a friendship with the late master.

On June 30, 1982, principal photography began on this five-million-dollar modest thriller under the aegis of Universal Studios and executive producer Bernard Schwartz (*Coalminer's Daughter*), with a script by Tom Holland (*The*

*Beast Within*, Class of '84), music by Jerry Goldsmith, and a cast that includes Anthony Perkins and Vera Miles, reprising their roles in the original, Robert Loggia as Norman Bates's psychiatrist, and newcomer Meg Tilly.

Predictably, the plot of *Psycho II* has been cloaked in secrecy, but this much is known: Norman Bates is declared legally sane and released in spite of the objections of Vera Miles's Lila, who was Janet Leigh's sister in the original. Against the advice of his psychiatrist, Norman returns to the motel and the old Victorian frame house on the hill (the original sets were used) and takes a job as a cook's assistant in a diner down the road, where he finds himself attracted to a pretty waitress and must come to grips with the social changes that two decades have brought.

Franklin is certain that Hitchcock would approve of his film. "Hitchcock does not frighten me," he says. "I knew him personally and was even invited to watch him shoot *Topaz*. Whenever I talked to him he would express dismay because other filmmakers did not make movies the way he did. *Psycho*, perhaps even more than his other films, is an example of expressionistic filmmaking almost without the necessity for dialogue. The story is told through visual imagery, which is something Hitchcock learned from German expressionists like Murnau when he was a student in Germany in the twenties. That style is something he taught me. I feel that I'm carrying on a tradition and that what I'm doing is in the nature of a tribute to him."

According to Franklin, Anthony Perkins did have a few reservations about playing Norman Bates again—"until he read our script," Franklin says flatly. He notes that Perkins was once offered another *Psycho II* project (Perkins was even asked to direct it), "but they didn't have the rights to the material."

In addition, author Robert Bloch, who wrote the original *Psycho* novel (inspired by the real-life atrocities of mass murderer Ed Gein), has recently published a novel, *Psycho II*, which has no connection to the *Psycho II* film. "It's somewhat coincidental," says Franklin wryly. "The Universal Studios may have been offered Bloch's story, but they went with a new treatment."

The power of the original rested to a great extent on its shock value. Now, more than two decades later, after film audiences have witnessed far more graphic scenes, Franklin may find that it's not easy to shock the average filmgoer. "*Psycho* was the first film to combine nudity and violence using action montage and clever editing to get around the censors, and it scared the hell out of people," says Franklin. "We did wonder, 'What can we do now to have the same effect?' The answer was not to kill someone with an axe in a hot tub. What's frightening about *Psycho* was the futility and vulnerability of the

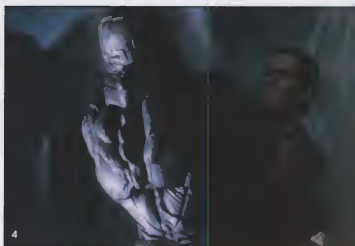
(continued on page 56)



1. Norman Bates (Anthony Perkins) is congratulated by his psychiatrist (Robert Loggia) after being declared legally sane following twenty-two years in an asylum.
2. Back at the infamous Bates Motel, still overshadowed by the old house (both from the original film), the psychiatrist stops by to see that Norman is adjusting well to civilian life.
3. Norman anxiously climbs the stairs (where Martin Balsam bought it in *Psycho*) to visit his old bedroom and the bedroom of his dead mother.
4. Lila (Vera Miles)—whose sister Marion (Janet Leigh) was one of Norman Bates's victims in the original *Psycho*—returns to the old Bates house and is drawn to the scene of *Psycho*'s climax, the fruit cellar.
5. Having taken a job as a cook's assistant in a local diner, Norman contemplates the allure of a certain utensil...
6. ... and forms a close relationship with one of the waitresses (Meg Tilly, late of *Tex*).



# THE KEEP





# IN PARAMOUNT'S VERSION OF THE PAPERBACK BESTSELLER, INTERFERING NAZIS STUMBLE ON A FAR MORE ANCIENT EVIL. JAMES VERNIERE REPORTS.

Given director Michael Mann's previous screen credit, *Thief*, a brooding existential tale of an ex-con's attempt to sever his ties with the underworld by performing one last heist, Mann's involvement in Paramount Pictures' upcoming film *The Keep* is a bit of a mystery. Based on the successful (if generally run-of-the-mill) novel by F. Paul Wilson, who acknowledges a debt to H.P. Lovecraft, Robert E. Howard, and Clark Ashton Smith, *The Keep* is a gothic horror tale of a vampirelike creature imprisoned in an ancient Carpathian fortress whose every brick is inlaid with a tiny metal cross. When Nazi soldiers are stationed there during World War II, the creature is inadvertently unleashed. The novel graphically depicts the systematic slaughter of the Nazis and the attempt to contain the creature before it spreads chaos and destruction throughout the globe.

On one level, Wilson's tale is a metaphor for war and the bloodlust it generates. On another level, *The Keep* aspires to be an epic tale of the eternal struggle between good and evil as personified by the creature and his adversary. Stylistically, the story is a hybrid, a mating of two genres, the gothic and the war novel—a technique that has been popularized in recent films such as *Outland* (little more than a *High Noon* on Io) and *Blade Runner* (which combines science fiction and film noir).

According to advance reports, director Michael Mann has taken Wilson's basic premise and his Roumanian setting and transformed the rest of the story into a lyrical, highly stylized study of the sensuality of evil. The director himself refers to the film as "an adult fairy tale that is scary and romantic." Mann, who also wrote the screenplay, admits that he has tried to play down the horror element in favor of a more allegorical approach.

In a recent interview, Mann was eager to establish that there are no vampires in *The Keep*. "The film has nothing to do with Dracula, who was, as you know, a world-class psychotic," said Mann. "What the film does have to do with is how fables grow out of real events. The historical Dracula was a mass murderer; the Dracula of folklore is a supernatural creature that thrives on the blood of the living. Fables like this predate modern psychology. They're primitive attempts to encode deviant behavior and to warn people about the existence of evil in the real world."

Mann, who is very careful not to reveal the plot of his film in any great detail, explained that he wants to portray the struggle between good and evil in the manner that Jean Cocteau depicted human love in *Beauty and the Beast*. "I wanted to do something stylized both in cinematic and narrative form. Fairy tales have the power to provoke very strong emotions because they communicate on the level of unconscious fears and desires. They have the power of dreams. So I decided to stylize the art direction and the photography, but use realistic characterization and dialogue."

In the novel, the creature embodying evil has a name—or rather, names. When he first encounters a crippled Jewish scholar (played in the movie by Ian McKellen of Broadway's *Amadeus*), the creature identifies himself as



Viscount Radu Molasar, an "Undead" and a contemporary of Vlad Tepes, the historical Dracula. Later on in Wilson's novel, we learn that Molasar is no vampire but an adept named Rasalom that has lived and feasted on fear and hatred since his origin in the mythical First Age. (In this Wilson perhaps owes a debt to Lovecraft and his Great Race.) We also learn that Rasalom's nemesis is a superhuman warrior named Glaeken, who fought Rasalom throughout time until, during the Middle Ages, he successfully imprisoned him in the Keep. Mann has retained the concept of Glaeken in the film; he's to be played by Scott Glenn (*Urban Cowboy*, *Personal Best*), and he's now referred to as "Glaeken Trismegistos" (the "thrice powerful" epithet is Mann's invention), an enigmatic stranger who somehow knows that the evil within the Keep has been released.

The filmmakers, who shot *The Keep* on location in North Wales and at Shepperton Studio Center under the supervision of cinematographer Alex Thomson (*Excalibur*), plan to cap the film with an extensive special-effects sequence. Nick Alder (*Alien*) is supervising the mechanical effects, while Wally Veevers (2001, *Excalibur*) handles the opticals.

Whether or not Michael Mann can transform a mediocre novel into a seductive fairy tale about the sensuality of evil remains to be seen. The hopes he's expressed for *The Keep* sound reminiscent of Paul Schrader's pretensions for *Cat People*, and just as many believe that Schrader failed with that film, so Mann may find the fantasy genre frustratingly inhospitable to the blending of horror and high style. **W**

1. Wernacht Captain Klaus Woermann (Jurgen Prochnow of *Das Boot*) stands atop a slate cliff that overlooks the Keep, where his men are being systematically murdered by an unknown force.
2. As the evil Molasar (Mike Carter) looks on, S.S. Officer Koempfer (Gabriel Byrne, *Excalibur*'s Uther Pendragon) discovers the creature's handwork, the incinerated bodies of two storm troopers.
3. The enigmatic Glaeken Trismegistos (Scott Glenn of *Urban Cowboy*), an immortal being in human form, begins to metamorphose in preparation for his battle with Molasar.
4. Glaeken Trismegistos, partially transformed into his warrior incarnation, struggles with the already transformed Molasar.
5. Bathed in an eerie blue light, Captain Woermann flees from the Keep as the powers of Good and Evil do battle.
6. At the foot of a cliff in the Carpathian Alps stands Dr. Czu (Ian McKellen, *Solier* in the original *Amadeus*), a crippled Jewish historian whom Nazis have brought to the Keep to solve the mystery of the murders.



# Psycho II

(continued from page 53)

victims when exposed to the madness. The tonal quality of the original is what makes it a classic. I can't promise a scene to match the shower scene, but I can promise a number of interesting sequences." Franklin does say that *Psycho II* will feature "a little" nudity and "a little" graphic violence.

"Norman Bates is an even more sympathetic character in our film," he adds, "in that he's more pathetic than he was. If it was sad to see such a repressed young man at twenty-two or twenty-three, how much sadder will he be if he is the same twenty-two years later? Life has been cruel to Norman."

What does Franklin say to those who are automatically skeptical of films that have numbers in their titles? "All I can say is, judge for yourself. I'll go out on a limb. I think that anybody who looks at our film objectively will not be disappointed. I think that our film evokes what we remember of the original, but, most important, it is a film in its own right. What I hope will happen is that the two films will merge and become one larger film." **17**

Perkins, as the new updated Norman Bates, receives the tender touch of Meg Tilly in *Psycho II*.

## ANTHONY PERKINS ON BATES 1 & 2

Anthony Perkins is a haunted man, and Norman Bates is his ghost. Ever since Perkins's performance as the knife-wielding transvestite schizophrenic in Alfred Hitchcock's classic film *Psycho* (1960), the actor and Norman Bates have been inseparable in the minds of millions of filmgoers. So definitive was Perkins in the role that he's virtually become the icon of psychosis in film mythology, the standard against which all subsequent film crazies have been measured.

For years Perkins tried to exorcise the ghost of Norman but failed. Almost every character Perkins played seemed—to filmgoers, if not to the actor himself—extensions of Norman, for in films such as *The Fool Killer* (1964), *Pretty Poison* (1968), *Catch-22* (1970), *Mahogany* (1975), and *Winter Kills* (1979) he offered us a gallery of doomed mistiffs who are often more worthy of our sympathy than their many victims.

Today, Perkins has declared a truce with Bates. In fact, he's playing him again in the upcoming Universal film *Psycho II*, a sequel to Hitchcock's thriller directed by Australian filmmaker Richard Franklin. Now living in California with his wife Berry Berenson and their two sons, Elvis and Osgood (in a weird twist, Osgood plays Norman Bates as a child in

*Psycho II*), Perkins talked to us about the sequel and his twenty-three-year relationship with Norman Bates.

**TZ:** Do you ever have bad dreams about Norman Bates?

**Perkins:** No, Norman's a pal, really. I think he'd make a good friend. He's loyal and sensitive and vulnerable and imaginative.

**TZ:** But he does kill people.

**Perkins:** He's not himself when he does that.

**TZ:** What effect has *Psycho* had on your life and your career?

**Perkins:** Well, at first it was smothering—for the first decade. In the second decade, I grew to appreciate it. My wife once said, "You've got such resistance to this movie and to people coming up and talking to you about it. Why don't you just try getting behind it?" From that time on I've found it much easier to live with.

**TZ:** Why was *Psycho* such a success?

**Perkins:** Because it wasn't exploitation or a rip-off. It was a good tale with a great twist ending. Audiences liked Norman. He didn't bother anybody until people started bothering him.

**TZ:** It's said that the people in *Psycho II* don't leave Norman alone.

**Perkins:** No, they just can't leave him alone.

**TZ:** And *Psycho* fans don't leave you alone either.

**Perkins:** Well, I don't mind, because people who reminisce about the film always have a smile on their face, because they enjoyed being taken in by the movie.

**TZ:** What would Mr. Hitchcock have to say about a sequel?

**Perkins:** I don't know. The sequel was made with a great amount of care. No one wanted to smudge anyone's memory of the original. It's been done with an eye to reverence.

**TZ:** Is there any truth to the story that Hitchcock treated actors like cattle?

**Perkins:** He certainly had a reputation for it, and a lot of actors have reinforced that reputation. But he always treated me perfectly companionably—and collaboratively, as well. He even gave me some money to buy the clothes I thought would be right for Norman.

**TZ:** What first attracted you to the sequel?

**Perkins:** Just holding a script in my hands that said *Psycho II* was a blast. In addition, I found it a real page-turner.

**TZ:** Did you have any reservations about the project?

**Perkins:** Like what?

**TZ:** Like that the filmmakers were tampering with a classic.

**Perkins:** Well, if it had been a remake I might have worried about that. But since we were only respectfully suggesting a graft onto the original branch,

I was not concerned.

**TZ:** Is it true that you were offered another *Psycho II* and that you were even asked to direct it?

**Perkins:** Yes, but you can offer someone anything, and if you don't have the rights you can't make the film. I must say that that wasn't a bad script either.

**TZ:** How has Norman Bates changed in the twenty-two years between *Psycho* and *Psycho II*?

**Perkins:** He's older but wiser. He realizes that he has a potential for strange behavior, whereas before he was only an innocent party protecting someone he loved. He tries hard to rehabilitate himself. He realizes that he has something of a name around town. He wants to start over. **TZ:** Did Ed Gein, the man who inspired Robert Bloch's original novel *Psycho*, ever indicate to you in any way that he'd seen your performance?

**Perkins:** Oh, I used to get lots of letters from him, at least two or three a week. No, really. I'm just kidding! I really don't know.

**TZ:** Will *Psycho II* recreate the seductive ghoulishness of the original?

**Perkins:** I hope so, because that seductive ghoulishness is the heart of the American Gothic horror story. Seductive ghoulishness is a fine way to describe it.

—JV



# In the Field of the Dying Cherry

HOW LONG COULD A TREE KEEP ON DYING? HOW LONG COULD A MAN?

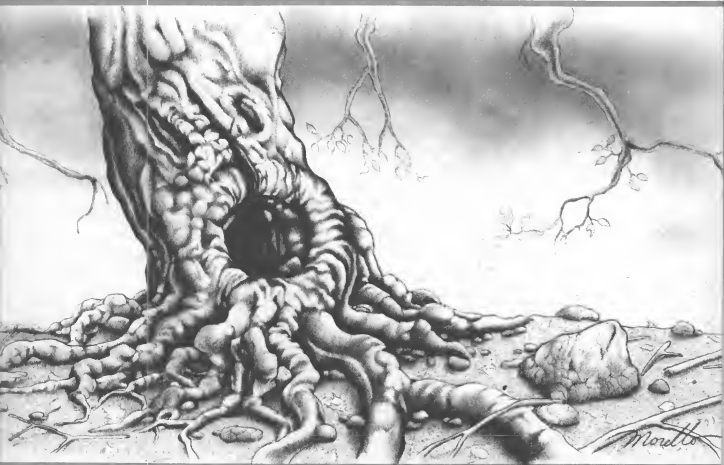
**A**s a child, I was terrified of the cherry tree field. I did not know what it was that affected me so—not that a child needs reasons for terror. I knew, though, that no other place on the vast farm sent such heart-stopping apprehension thrilling through me every time I went there; the sensation that something waited, just beyond sight or feeling, something wrong and frightening, there in the field of the great dying cherry tree.

Many other places on the farm might seem more threatening. There was, for instance, a deep wood that settled gradually into a tangled swamp, and there were places far into the swamp where the maze of untouched trees and fallen logs and primordial

growth lay in ranks so thick that the sounds of the settled world vanished, and children venturing there heard nothing that had not been heard a thousand years earlier.

Of course we told stories in those days, my brothers and sisters and I, to the limits of our imaginations: stories of monsters and ghosts. Such creatures would have thrived in those deep swamps, and I could have feared them, but I did not. We went there to pick flowers, and now and then we played hide and seek in the trackless wild. Fear of the swamp was an adult fear, and it came later.

Even on the way to that far corner of the farm where the cherry tree field lay, there were places where



## Tree by Curtis K. Stadtfeld

I might have been afraid. The lane ran, at one point, through a willow swamp, and, by mid-summer, the willows' yellow blossoms had vanished and tall saplings, rising far above a child's sight, tipped across the lane and sent rolling shadows over the tracks.

The willows grew thick and their roots went deep to seek and hold moisture. A child knows, without being told, that it is in these moist, steamy-warm, unvisited places that odd things grow. Still, we were not afraid; the willow swamp was our hideout, and the curling trail cut an opening we used as a fort. We knew we would not be surprised there. We talked about the outlaws who hid out in the willow swamp, but we did not believe in them, for we had invented

them ourselves. I walked on the lane barefoot, and perhaps I laughed a little nervously sometimes, but I was not afraid.

The field with the cherry tree standing alone, out in the middle of it, was as far from the house and barn as we could go without trespassing on someone else's land. It was nearly three-quarters of a mile back the lane, past a thousand landmarks, far for a child to go, even on the magic errand of calling a father home for supper.

The field itself was bleak and almost barren. Crops there were never quite as good as they should have been. The slope where the cherry tree stood was strewn with rocks, the broken bones of the earth, scat-



tered there as though the earth had fought a visceral battle with itself.

But the lane that led there was a happy one, for there were bluebirds in hollow posts along the way, and there was our father at the end of the journey to call home to supper. We could ride home with him as our reward for ending his long day in the hot dry dust of the field. Sometimes I would ride on his shoulders, or high on the steaming back of one of the weary horses, or we might bounce along on the iron seat of one of the primitive machines he used to cultivate the land.

Even more than in the field, strangeness lay within the tree itself; it was a cancerous claw clutching at the sky, its bark flaking off like snake scales, twigs littering the ground. It was a big tree, not the kind that grows cherries for pies, but a wild cherry tree, and if it had been healthy, its wood would have made that fine red lumber prized for furniture. It may have been left standing for that reason; someone might have hoped to harvest it one day, to make furniture of it or sell it at a good price. It was perhaps fifty feet high, the trunk too large to reach around; several of its limbs had the girth of a ship's mast. Once it had had the promise of becoming a majestic tree, but now it was a rotting wreck, with spaces in the trunk where unknown things holed up, whole branches dead, and, some years, hardly more than a token of foliage. It was dying. But it had been dying for as long anyone could remember.

Anything dying is an affront to a farmer, whose business it is to nurture growing things. One would have expected the tree to be taken down, not just because it was ugly, as a sick calf or a rotten tooth is ugly, but because it was an obstacle in the middle of a cultivated field. It broke the pattern of work, scrambled the lines of corn rows. Worse, it shaded out, even with its pathetic growth, a big patch of ground, so that whatever was planted near it grew thin and was hardly worth harvesting.

The tree stayed, though, and I did not know why, unless there was still some faint hope that it might one day make a good log of lumber. I did not think about it consciously, because a child does not.

Yet my terror of the field went deeper than the simple unease of something being wrong.

It was on a crackling hot day in July that I learned why the tree terrified me. It was my twelfth summer, the last time of childhood, when the stirrings of adolescence are felt and the threat of manhood is at last revealed, yet the unpredictable energy of childishness still prevails, rushing to the surface now and then so that conflicting torrents tear a boy between his bare-foot past and his shod future. I walked the lane between the drying fields, beside dipping grain and the dark green corn, past the mown hayfields where the first promise of summer had been harvested and which now lay dormant and where the cornstalks reached toward fall harvest as I toward manhood. I trotted around the swamp and ducked through the tunnel of willows, crossed an opening, and turned to where my father rode the horse-drawn cultivator through the corn, and I saw the man hanging in the cherry tree.

He was black. Not black as a Negro is black, but burned black, as Hell must be burned black by infernal heat. He was black with age, black from long exposure to the stains of time. His clothing was black, and his feet were anchored in the wind by black boots, which pointed down and marked the center of his eternal wind-blown swinging circle, the pivot of his endless dance. His hands were black, too, where they hung at his sides, black as if from long contact with leather stained by horse sweat. His nails were black as well, and broken as if from some kind of struggle. One arm hung oddly.

My gaze was drawn up and held beyond my will, and I expected his eyes to be black, too. But then I heard a crow caw somewhere, and I saw that there were no eyes in the sockets. But the holes where the eyes had been seemed black.

I could not scream, although I tried. I ran to my father, who rose from his seat behind the cultivator, and I leaped on him. He was startled. He stopped the horses, which had not noticed anything because of their blinders, and I turned him to the tree where the man hung, but my father saw nothing.

Still, he was patient with me, and I rode his lap to supper, but could not eat. My mother fed me warm milk and toast with sugar, and I went to bed early.

And wakened late, in the darkness of the child-forbidden hours, and heard voices, and crept to the stairwell and listened.

"I went to see Uncle Hugh," my father was saying. "You know how he is; if you buy him a beer, he'll tell you stories. I think he makes most of them up, but you can't be sure."

I could hear the noises my mother made as she sewed. She had always had a special fondness for the old man, who was nobody's uncle as far as we knew. It was just some maternal instinct reaching out from her to his loneliness.

He was black.  
Not black as a Negro  
is black, but  
burned black,  
as Hell must be  
burned black  
by infernal heat.

He was black with age,  
black from long exposure  
to the stains of time.

"At first, he didn't want to tell me anything. Said nothing funny ever happened here that he knew about. But after he'd had a couple of beers, he kind of grinned at me—God, his teeth are black and awful, those he's still got—and he started to laugh.

"Long back, not long after the Civil War, Hugh said, something funny did happen on this place."

"My, how would he know that?" It was my mother. "Is he really that old?"

"Well, like I said, I don't know if any of this is true. But if he was a boy right after the Civil War, he'd be in his late seventies now. Maybe so. I don't rightly know how old he is.

"Anyway, as Hugh tells it, a traveling man came through here one time. You know they were still scouting out the county for pine lumber then, and there was a hotel in town. So this stranger put up at the hotel, and stayed for a few days, but he didn't seem to be scouting for lumber or anything else anyone could make out. Odd one.

"And then one day he paid his bill and started to leave town. Some of the boys noticed that he was leading two horses, and he'd just had the one when he came to town. So because he was such an odd one, they put it to him about them. Figured maybe he stole them. But he wouldn't tell 'em anything, and tried to just ride off. Well, Tiny Johnson—I guess you wouldn't know him, but I just remember him and they called him Tiny, because he was so big—Tiny jumped him and the first thing they knew, the stranger had a busted arm and was passed out.

"So they looked into his saddle bags, and they didn't find any bill of sale or anything—not that everybody had bills of sale in those days—but they did find some money and a bottle of good whiskey, and they shared out the money and drank the whiskey and one thing led to another, and old Hugh's story is that they took him down a back road, back toward the place here, and they went down a lane in the dark and they found a tree out in the middle of a field, and they hanged him, higher 'n hell, from our old cherry tree."

My parents were silent for a moment.

"The thing was, they found out next day that he'd bought that horse fair and square, and God knows why he didn't want to explain himself. So the boys, sobered up now, had to go out next day and cut him down. Nobody'd seen him all that time, he being back in a field like that, but the crows had got his eyes. The boys just threw the body back in the swamp, never even buried it. They set the horses loose, and pretty soon they turned up at somebody's farm that recognized them, and the farmer took 'em back to the fellow who sold 'em to the traveling man in the first place, and nobody ever came to inquire about it at all."

In the pause, I could tell that my mother had stopped sewing.

"Then old Hugh, he laughed that creaky old

laugh of his, and he winks at me and he says, 'Of course, this has nothing to do with you or me.'"

"My God," my mother said. "He must have been one of those 'boys.'"

"I didn't think of that," my father said. "I guess so. How else would he have known? Not the kind of thing the boys would have talked about, except among themselves." He paused. "But maybe he made the story up. Old men do, sometimes, just to have somebody listen to them.


"Anyway," he said, with that voice of his that ended talk about things, "like he said, it doesn't have anything to do with us. I expect the boy imagined it, too."

**T**hat time is thirty years past. My father is long dead, and I work the farm myself, and another nearby that I bought a few years ago. I do not believe in ghosts.

The cherry tree is still dying. I have never seen a tree take so long at dying. It is a Goddamned nuisance in that field, and if I get time this fall I will take it down.

This morning, when I went back with the tractor and wagon to get a load of stone for the fireplace we are building in the new family room, the man was hanging in the tree again. I had not seen him there for a long time. It was early in the day when I went by, and I saw that black dead broken body twisting there. I could no more stop myself than I could on the first day I saw him, thirty years ago. This time the crows had gotten only one eye. Late in the afternoon, when I went back again, the other eye was gone.

I did not take my youngest son, who is twelve, with me. I don't know what he would see. He can go along tomorrow. By then I know the man will be gone. I do not think my son will notice that there are no crows in the field, that they are busy, noisy, deep in the swamp where the body lies.

I will not tell my wife of this. She is from the city, and I do not want her to be frightened of the country. 

# Confessions of a Freelance Fantasist

by Isidore Haiblum

A SURVIVAL GUIDE IN THE FORM OF A MEMOIR,  
BY THE AUTHOR OF *THE TSADDIK OF THE SEVEN WONDERS*.

*Part One, In Which Our Hero Learns that the Journey from Coney Island's Boardwalk to Easy Street Is Somewhat Longer than Expected.*

**I**t was an overcast afternoon in March 1969. I was somewhere in the mid-forties on Manhattan's West Side, standing in front of a swanky restaurant. I was waiting for my benefactor, a paperback editor who had promised to take me to lunch—my first lunch ever with an editor—and to purchase a novel I had written.

I had sweated for this long-delayed day; I had dreamed, schemed, and plotted, and now it was finally here. Could Easy Street be far away?

Easy Street and I, it should be pointed out, are still far from buddies, and my own origins lie a good distance from the glitter of Publishers' Row.

## MY UNLIKELY BACKGROUND

I was born in Brooklyn—a Brooklyn few would recognize today. Horse and wagon peddlers roamed the streets, their carts piled high with fruits and vegetables, old clothing, or junk metal. Uniformed sanitation men wielding long-handled brooms cleaned up after the horses. No garbage littered the pavements. El trains rumbled overhead, while trolley cars clanged below. Neither were disfigured by graffiti. The air, as a rule, smelled sweet and clean. Automobiles all had running boards you could stand on, and in winter the snows seemed very high indeed.

Mother and Father first met in famed Carnegie Hall, brought together

by a love of classical music. My dad, who in those days earned more as a chess and bridge player than as a fancy leather-goods cutter (his sometime trade), hobnobbed in the gaming clubs with the likes of Jascha Heifetz, and our Coney Island home was always filled with the strains of Beethoven, Brahms, and Schubert.

Between them my parents spoke four languages perfectly: English, Yiddish, Russian, and Polish. But during my early childhood, not an English word crossed their lips in my presence. I was the victim of a massive conspiracy. Both my parents were Yiddishists who believed, with millions of other Jews, that the Jewish people were a *nation*—not merely, as some would have it, a religion—and that all Jews should speak Yiddish.

On the day my parents tried to enroll me in Yiddish school, the teacher heard me out and shook his head. "It's too late," he told them. "He already knows too much for the class." When at last I ventured out on Surf Avenue, within sight of the boardwalk and earshot of the Atlantic Ocean, I found to my consternation that all the natives were chatting away in a totally incomprehensible language called English.

I began making the rounds of Yiddish clubs as a one-boy vaudeville act. I wore a large green silken bow tie, told jokes, and sang snappy songs—all in Yiddish. At one of these recitals, the



*When the author spoke only Yiddish.*

director of the famed Yiddish Art Theatre offered me a part in his upcoming play on Second Avenue. My mother, after much soul-searching, declined the offer on the grounds that I was too young for a full-fledged thespian career. (Somewhere, in an alternate universe, that great actor, Isidore Haiblum, is bringing the house down. No one has heard of English. Everyone in the country speaks only Yiddish.)

Meanwhile, I was learning English from my neighborhood pals as we frolicked under the boardwalk. There was only one slight hitch to my mastery of the Bard's tongue: to this day I speak it with a strange foreign accent as though I were a fugitive from Minsk.

Aside from that, I grew up like any other normal, healthy American boy. Almost.

## OFF TO THE STICKS

During the hectic years of the Second World War, leather became a scarce commodity, all of it channeled into the war effort. Father, with Mom and me in tow, moved to Detroit to work in a war plant. The auto industry in Detroit had been converted to the production of jeeps, tanks, and cannons, and the town's population had tripled overnight.

This was long before the Salk vaccine, and polio epidemics, abetted by overcrowding, periodically laid waste to the city. My mother, a disciple of the noted health faddist and crank Bernarr [sic] Macfadden, followed her guru's advice in *Physical Culture Magazine* and kept me out of school lest some polio bug zap me. (The disease was contagious, of course, and I have



The author today.

often wondered if—again—in some alternate universe my doppelganger who *did* go to school isn't at this very moment making his way down some crowded street on crutches.)

When the truant officers came calling, alerted to my absence by keen-eyed public school officials, my mother promptly enrolled me in an Orthodox yeshiva, a religious school governed by rabbis with one eye fixed on the Torah (the Old Testament) and the other on heaven. The classrooms were small, dusty, and crowded, the hours long and tedious, and the course of study right out of the Middle Ages. Only the sounds of traffic outside reminded me that I was still part of the twentieth century.

My parents, I should add, weren't even remotely religious; they were Secular Yiddishists, another concept entirely. But my dotty mom had her reasons for inflicting this burden on me. The long-bearded, otherworldly rabbis couldn't have cared less whether I showed up or not in the yeshiva, as long as their monthly bill was paid.

Mostly I didn't show up.

But every now and then during winter, when the bug took its annual powder, there I was, an authentic, certified yeshiva *bukher*, seated dreamily in a classroom whose archaic goings-on, to this very day, remain a deep, dark mystery to me.

#### SUPERKID

During most of spring, summer, and fall, I was on permanent leave from the classrooms and from Detroit itself. The first year, I was stashed at a farm in upstate Michigan where the livestock

and my mother kept me company. The bucolic setting and absence of rabbis seemed like an ongoing picnic to me.

To fill the long hours I took to reading: *Treasure Island*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Huckleberry Finn*, Jules Verne's *Mysterious Island*, *Nevada* by Zane Grey, James Hilton's *Lost Horizon*, the cartoons of Peter Arno. Anything that came my way, I read.

But the classics usually took a backseat to popular culture, especially in Detroit. Peculiarly clad characters in multicolored capes and costumes dove straight out of the comic books, radio speaker, and silver screen of the Saturday matinee and right into my sense of self. My true, hidden identity—which I shared only with other eight- or nine-year-olds—revealed itself most tellingly in the nighttime hours as I lay in bed waiting for sleep to overtake me. The local newsboy always made his round at this hour, calling out, "*Free Press*, paper-r-r," his voice growing fainter as he moved off through the city, until it faintly faded into the night.

This voice, which still echoes at me across the decades, sparked my imagination, and, garbed in a cape, boots, and a bright red or blue union suit with a lightning bolt or a large S emblazoned on my chest, I would fly over the city's rooftops, battling crime. In this world of darkest night, crime occurred on every street corner. Thugs with blazing pistols and tommy guns stuck up scores of banks, candy stores, and supermarkets, shot citizens by the hundreds, tied traffic into knots, and even menaced an occasional damsel. The cops were either on the run or had left town altogether. Only the brave

flying lad in cape and union suit stood between mankind and utter chaos. Thank God he was up to the job!

For how many years did I dream myself to sleep in this way? Did I ever suspect that these flights of fancy—and the five- and six-page homemade comic books I both painstakingly narrated and drew, down to the last *wham!* and *splat!*—were the first hesitant steps of a future writer? Not on your life!

#### HIGHER EDUCATION

I was twelve years old. When it came to the popular arts by now, I was second to none. B-movies (Wild Bill Elliot as two-fisted Red Ryder; Tom Conway's urbane crime-fighter, The Falcon; the madcap Laurel and Hardy setting the world on its ear), the Sunday funnies (The Spirit, Alley Oop, Li'l Abner), mountains of comic books (The Human Torch, Plastic Man, Captain Marvel), and endless radio programs (*I Love a Mystery*, *Inner Sanctum*, *Jack Armstrong*) filled my days. I was especially fond of a classic kiddie radio program called *Let's Pretend*, which specialized in myths, magic, and adventure. Every Saturday it came calling at our home. One of its stars was Daisy Alden, who often, with great relish, played the witch, and was to play, several years hence, a prime role in my life.

Unlike most future fantasy writers, I read little science fiction or fantasy in my youth. In the early fifties, however, I listened to radio's *Dimension X* and its successor, *X-Minus One*. The stories of Isaac Asimov, Ray Bradbury, Robert Heinlein, and later Robert Sheckley, Frederik Pohl, and their confrères zoomed through the airwaves, bringing me "From the far hori-





## Confessions of a Freelance Fantasist

zons of the unknown . . . tales of new dimensions in time and space." (At least that's what the announcer said.) And I became hooked on the radio shows. But to read the stuff, let alone write it, never even crossed my mind.

One afternoon I strolled into a Woolworth's five-and-dime store, where a display of paperbacks caught my eye, their covers depicting various scenes of gore, violence, and mayhem. Nothing new there—I thrived on the stuff. Browsing, I came across a truly striking cover: a hand-held pistol was shooting a hole through a huge, air-brushed golden badge that bore the intriguing inscription, *The Return of the Continental Op*. Above the badge it said "Dashiell Hammett" and below, "A Dell Mystery." I shelled out twenty-five cents and carried my prize home.

The volume contained six Continental Op stories, and each was a marvel of action and mood. They were out-and-out fantasies done up in factual detail. Their language was loaded with slang, idiom, and argot which went off like fireworks on the printed page. And their first-person narrator, a lone man pitted against hostile strangers, was obviously—me!

### DAISY ALDEN

Detroit, rabbis, and my annual outings had long since palled, and I breathed a heartfelt sigh of relief when at last my family returned to its senses and headed back to civilization—namely, New York. I attended Manhattan's High School of Industrial Art (today known as Art and Design), bent on becoming a commercial artist. Not for nothing had I spent years drawing my own comic books. In my junior term my lit teacher turned out to be none other than Daisy Alden, the former witch on *Let's Pretend*. Daisy, a petite, perky lady with large eyes, bangs, and a neat sense of humor, was a distinguished poet as well as an actress and teacher, and her classes were something special. We read Karel Capek's 1921 sci-fi classic play *R.U.R.* (the work that coined the term "robot"). The Dada and Surrealist movements we studied were, in Daisy's hands, still aboil with life and excitement. I wrote book reviews and short stories, mostly humorous satires not too unlike (as Daisy pointed out years later) my future output, and ended up editing the high school yearbook and literary arts magazine. I enjoyed lit more than



My true, hidden identity.

drawing and decided then and there to become a writer.

On graduation day I also walked off with the English medal, but not without a hassle. The department chairman objected that I couldn't spell my way out of a paper bag, but Daisy and her cohorts voted him down. (After all, as she later explained to me, Ernest Hemingway was a lousy speller, too.) This triumph of illiteracy prompted me to forgo brushing up on my spelling for the next couple of decades.

### COLLEGE DAYS

I enrolled at CCNY and majored in English. My lack of early schooling had left a few gaps in my education. My mastery of math was all but nonexistent, and I carried three spelling variants of every word in my head, all of them wrong. My years of heavy reading, however, put me in good stead. I zipped through my English and social science courses like a quiz kid, my lamentable spelling deemed a mere eccentricity by my profs. Little did they know.

I also edited the college humor magazine, *Mercury*, which poked fun at college life and other handy targets, a sort of provincial *National Lampoon*. To avoid the fate of my predecessors who were suspended, I shrewdly excised all dirty words from the magazine.

Meanwhile, I was taking honors in Yiddish with Dr. Max Weinreich, who happened to be the world's foremost Yiddish linguist—and was also a fan of none other than Mickey Spillane. We strolled together to the subway each afternoon chatting about hard-boiled dicks and Yiddish lit. He urged me to read Isaac Bashevis Singer in the original Yiddish. I did, and bumped into all my lost ancestors, who strutted and cavorted through his pages. In years to come I would reread Singer's works

time and again and always rediscover my Yiddish self."

### ON MY OWN

By the time I graduated, I was looking forward to a career as a professional writer. Easy enough for a hotshot like me, right? I decided to emulate my humorist idols, Benchley, Thurber, and Perelman, and proceeded to bombard *The New Yorker* with short—and what I considered to be side-splitting—essays about my family, friends, and Upper West Side neighborhood—essays which *The New Yorker* immediately shot back by return mail.

Lowering my sights, I went off to visit Harvey Kurtzman, then editor of *Humbug* magazine, in search of a freelance assignment. Kurtzman had founded *Mad* in 1952, and the work he did during the following three years, before jumping ship in a policy wrangle, had helped set the tone of American humor in the sixties and beyond. Kurtzman would make an ideal boss, I imagined, but I never even got to meet him.

Harry Chester, *Humbug*'s business manager, was the only one holding down a desk when I arrived at their small Madison Avenue office. He looked through the material I'd brought along, mostly my old *Mercury* pieces, and shook his head sadly.

"Let me tell you something," Chester said.

"Anything at all," I assured him. "Anything."

Chester sighed. "*Humbug* is on its last legs. We've got distribution problems. Look for Isidore Haiblum's interview with Singer in an upcoming *Twilight Zone*—Ed.



lems—we're losing money on each issue. We're not going to make it."

"Then there's no job?"

"Hell, there's almost no magazine."

"What about my work?" I asked.

Chester glanced down at my material. He grinned. "Not bad. But let me give you a piece of advice."

I told him that I could use any good advice he had lying around.

"Find yourself another line of work," he said. "Anything except freelance writing. It's for the birds."

"The birds?"

Chester nodded. "There's no money in it, son."

None of my professors at college had mentioned this minor drawback. Maybe they didn't know? The only ones to have previously raised the issue with me were the frantic parents of the girl I'd hoped to marry. (I didn't.)

I left Chester's office more disheartened than ever, but still determined to be a writer. If the great Hammett could do it, why not I? Besides, what would my ex-profs think if I called it quits so soon? What would I think?

## HARLEM

All literary ambitions, however, were quietly put on the back burner when I received my draft notice. The hitch was good for two years, which was two years more than I wanted to serve. I tried to enlist in the National Guard instead, but I was given the brush-off. The Guard was booked solid for the next year.

It was midsummer. I could still apply to grad school, still buying time, but it was too late to put in for a scholarship. And I was flat broke. Someone suggested that I get a job with the New York City Welfare Department as a social investigator.

The what?

I was totally ignorant of such matters. City College was no ivory tower, but my closest brush with poverty during my four years as English major had been confined to the pages of John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*.

In desperation I signed up with the Welfare Department anyway. After a three-week training period, I was dispatched to the Harlem Welfare Center. It was my job to interview dozens of welfare recipients in their homes and ascertain whether they really needed the money Big Brother was dishing out to them. At the same time, I entered

*Freelance writing is for the birds.*

NYU grad school, thus postponing my military service.

My welfare charges were called "clients," and nosing around in their lives was a disheartening affair. Whole families had been on welfare since the Great Depression. The poverty I encountered was absolutely appalling. Sour-smelling flats in ramshackle tenements looked like war zones, with cracked and peeling walls, broken furniture, and shattered windows. Illness, illiteracy, anger, and despair had savaged these people. Armies of social workers armed with blank checks and scores of training programs could hardly have been expected to make a dent in such conditions.

In those days clients were not allowed to own televisions, which were considered luxuries. But half the homes I visited had a tv set. To report it would have gotten the previous investigator in Dutch for failing to note this misdeed in his report; it would also have put the clients in hot water and tied me up for days in unseemly and embarrassing investigations. Everyone involved would have hated it. I turned a blind eye to these and other violations, and clients began to greet me as "the good investigator." Finally I'd made good.

A friend had been punching me in and out on the time clock, so I was able to attend classes at NYU. Instead of "investigating" three clients a day, I would check up on twelve and take the next couple of days off. But when a fire rendered a houseful of clients homeless on the morning I was ostensibly interviewing them, and they showed up in tatters at the welfare center, I knew it was time to put in for my retirement papers. Still, I'd earned enough dough to see me through the year and get me into the National Guard.

As I went off for six months' active duty, I received a gift from my bosom pal Stuart Silver, a one-time roommate and sometime collaborator who would eventually land in the history books by designing the famed King Tut and Vatican exhibitions at

the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Stuart slipped me Robert Shackley's Ballantine original *Untouched by Human Hands* and *The Puppet Masters* by Robert A. Heinlein. In the service I spent lots of time standing on long, seemingly immobile lines, and so could give these books my full attention. Now I became a fan.

I survived two months of basic training at Fort Dix and four months of duty as a medic in sunny San Antonio and, upon my discharge, returned to New York, noting with some dismay that I was back, where I started from—namely, unemployed and going broke. I resumed writing small, unpublished pieces and got a part-time job with a national patriotic institute. For four hours a day I sat in a small, stuffy cubbyhole, stuffed envelopes with various pamphlets extolling the virtues of democracy, and sent them off to inquiring school kids. The job—and the entire institute—consisted of this and nothing more. To lessen the tedium, I installed a radio, turned to WQXR, and caught Brahms, Mozart, and Rachmaninoff as I worked. It didn't help. I took to drawing little grinning Uncle Sams in top hats and stripes, prancing about and waving. I captioned these, "Hi, there!" and inserted them in the envelopes along with the pamphlets.

An envelope was misaddressed and returned to my boss, an ex-colonel. He called me into his office. In his hand was one of my Uncle Sams.

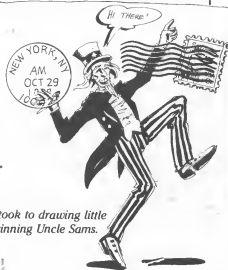
"Did you do this?" he demanded.

I admitted it.

"YOU'RE FIRED!"

I turned to go.

"You've got the wrong attitude, Haiblum," the colonel yelled after me. "You won't get far in the job market."



*I took to drawing little grinning Uncle Sams.*



*Have an agent find you an editor.*

The colonel was right.

Following the guidelines laid down by my college English prof, Irwin Stark, I continued to stay far away from any job requiring writing. ("It will only drain you," Stark had warned me.) I found work, briefly, as a Canadian booking agent for a bunch of folk singers, and ended up spending hours on the long-distance phone with coffee-house managers throughout Canada, pleading vainly for engagements. I joined a part-time survey on sex sponsored by Columbia University, and another on health, happiness, and mental stability, while I waited for fame and fortune to find me. (They didn't.) These jobs all look swell when adorning a dust jacket, but in real life they are strictly the pits.

When the Health Department suddenly phoned me—my former survey boss had recommended me—and offered me a full-time post which entailed lots of sitting around, I grabbed it. And over a period of months, while waiting for work to materialize on my desk or riding the subway to and from the office, I wrote my first novel, a tough-guy thriller somewhat in the style of my hero, Dashiell Hammett.

I had been hoarding my paychecks for months and had enough to live on for at least a year. The Health Department was driving me batty; each day in the office seemed a day wasted. I was simply not suited for a nine-to-five stint. I quit my job, and at last was convinced that my novel would sell. Even if it didn't, I'd have time to write another, and surely that one would sell. Unfortunately I knew no one in publishing. I had been knocking around for years as a would-be writer, but it had never occurred to me to make friends with *anyone* in publishing. How about that?

### THE BUSINESS

I pause here, for it occurs to me that many readers of this piece may themselves be beginning writers who share this problem.

There is more than one way of breaking into the field, I am glad to report. But before noting any, a cautionary word from the industry itself might be in order.

According to the *New York Times*, publishers complain that "theirs is an industry which turns out the equivalent of 40,000 new products a year, loses money on eighty percent of them, and earns on average less than half of what it could earn simply by investing in municipal bonds rather than books." Neat, eh?

The *Times* also quotes writers' groups to the effect that their members earn an average (give or take a buck) of \$5,000 a year.

Frankly, I believe neither writers' groups nor publishers. But I am discouraged by their figures nonetheless.

If you are not discouraged and are still intent on being a writer, here's the simplest way of getting into the business; mail your unsolicited masterpiece to the publisher of your choice.

This method, though, is not highly recommended, for you will land in the slush pile, where you will either be ignored or come to the attention of the editorial assistant, which is virtually the same thing.

Other and better methods are:

Have a writer send you to his agent or editor. Have an editor find you an agent. Have an agent find you an editor.

You can meet writers, agents, and editors through a buddy, at conventions, and even at the neighborhood bar sometimes. And you can always ask a friend to ask a friend, etc. Right?

Recommendations are the key to all three groups.

Agents who charge a fee for evaluating your work are more apt to give you the business than get you into it. The few in this category who are on the up-and-up will *still* not personally peruse your ms. Again, you'll be in the hands of the assistant office boy. And paying for the privilege to boot.

I was lucky. My old friend Stuart Silver came to my aid. His wife had an uncle who was a stockholder of Lancer Books, a small, now defunct paperback house. (You were expecting maybe Farrar, Straus & Giroux?) This uncle, whom I never even met, set up an appointment with Lancer editor-in-chief Larry Shaw.

### THE LONG WAIT

Shaw is currently rumored to be an agent in Hollywood. But in the fifties he wrote science fiction and had edited two well-thought-of sf anthologies. My Hammett-like novel—replete with dated thirties slang, improbable events, and outlandish characters—appealed to Shaw, who, no doubt, had been reared on similar genre shenanigans. He offered to buy it. But his boss, who owned the company, had been checking sales figures, and noted that mysteries were doing poorly that year. He vetoed the sale. Thus my first—and what turned out to be my only—offer for this opus went by the board.

But before too long, Shaw had left Lancer, moved to Dell, and asked to see me about purchasing a novel. Could fame and fortune be far behind?

I waited for Larry Shaw, my benefactor, that spring day for close to an hour, but he never *did* appear. My worst fears seemed to be realized. Shaw had changed his mind. As I headed home, I saw my career in ruins, finished before it even began.

But Shaw phoned the next day. His son had been in a traffic accident, and he—Shaw—had had to rush to the hospital ... Another lunch date was set, one that was kept. I sat in a restaurant, not sure who was supposed to pay the bill, writer or editor, and listened to Shaw tell me what turned out to be rather fateful news: He could no longer buy my private-eye novel, or for that matter *any* mystery or detective story I might write, because editor Shaw's sole province at Dell was—of all things—science fiction. <sup>17</sup>

—To be continued



Illustration by Nicola Cui

THE SITUATION WAS AS SIMPLE AS AN E.C. COMIC.  
UNFORTUNATELY, HARRY WAS A BIT SIMPLE, TOO!

I feel bad because I'm always making trouble for people. I know the reason, too. It's because I'm simple-minded. The kids at school teased me because I couldn't pass the exams. Mother told me not to pay any attention when kids called me retarded. But from the way she looked, I knew I was doing something wrong. Even though I'm fifty years old now, no matter how hard I try, I'm sometimes still a bother to people. Mostly I upset people I care about, like my friend Freddie and my wonderful wife Virginia.

The worst time I was a bother to my Mother and Dad happened when I was fifteen. We had this car

and it was a Sunday and we went on a picnic. It started to rain, oh boy it was raining hard, so Mother and Dad got in the back seat to finish the sandwiches, and they were talking and not paying too much attention to me in the front seat. I thought it would be nice to let them enjoy the picnic and not bother them about driving home, so I started the engine by turning the key. Then I put the lever on the "D" and stepped on the gas, just like Dad always did. Dad yelled because someone had planted a tree too close to the side of the road and we had a bad accident. Mother and Dad got killed, and that tree hurt me pretty bad, too. I lost an

## HARRY'S STORY

eye and hurt my leg and my face got burned. I still have the scars.

After I got out of the hospital, I got a nice glass eye and went to a special school for a while. When I got out I went to live with Auntie. She's dead now, but she told me things like I shouldn't drive cars because it's dangerous and can get me into trouble. So I don't drive. I always take buses to work, except for when Virginia had a car and she drove me to the company and back. She used to be real pretty.

You want to know how I met Virginia? I got a job in the office of Morris Industries. They make file cabinets, and I work as a file clerk. Everybody thinks that's pretty funny—file clerk in a file factory—so it must be. Virginia, she was doing some typing in the office when I got hired. She used to tell me she wasn't paid enough. I could tell right off she liked me, because she said I was the only idiot she could complain to without getting into trouble. Our supervisor doesn't like complaints.

I told Virginia I was sure glad I didn't need more money. In fact, I put most of it in the bank.

"Big deal, Harry," Virginia said to me. "You got three thousand saved, I bet."

"No," I told her. "I got one hundred and fifty thousand saved." She laughed and said, "On your salary?" That's what she asked me, like she didn't believe me.

Well, you should have seen her face the next day when we were alone and I showed her the bank-books. Of course, I told her how a lot of the money came from what Mother and Dad and Auntie left for me, but every two weeks I put even more money in. I took out house taxes and clothes and food money, and the rest went in the bank.

Well, oh boy, I could tell right away that Virginia liked me better than ever. Later that morning she asked me to go out on a date, and she explained what a date was. It was fun, I'll tell you.

The supervisor told me to stay away from Virginia because all Virginia wanted was money. I told Virginia that, and she explained that the supervisor was a crazy lady and I shouldn't tell her anything about our dates because she didn't have a man of her own and she would be jealous. Virginia asked me if I could keep our dates a secret.

Oh boy, was that fun, keeping it a secret. I didn't even tell the supervisor about Freddie, my best friend. He wasn't really my friend at first. He was Virginia's friend, but he liked me and he became my best friend. In fact, he was the only real friend I ever had, though I don't get to see him very much anymore. There is a fellow at work, Joe, and we have a cup of coffee once in a while, but he isn't a real friend. A real friend talks to you for more than five minutes. Freddie used to talk to me for more than fifteen minutes,

telling me how lucky I was that a good-looking girl like Virginia was crazy about me.

Oh boy, I couldn't believe how lucky I was to have a girl like Virginia crazy about me and a friend like Freddie who said he would be my best man when Virginia asked me to marry her. We all drove to Reno, and Virginia and me got married in this Courtship Chapel and it only cost thirty-five dollars, and then Virginia and Freddie and me drove back. We used Virginia's car, because since age fifteen I don't drive anymore.

Well, when we got back to town, Virginia moved into my house because it was bigger than her apartment. I'm glad we got married, but I don't see what the fuss is all about. The only difference between married and not married is you live in the same house and you spend a lot of time together. My friend Freddie spent a lot of time in our place with Virginia and me, and that was nice too. I miss Freddie almost as much as I miss Virginia.

My wife did two wonderful things for me. Every night she fixed me a drink of whiskey and sugar called an old-fashioned, and she gave it to me before I went to sleep. It sure tasted good.

The other wonderful thing Virginia did was to tell me how to be happy. "Do you ever feel discouraged, Harry?" she asked me, and I told her no. I could see she was real disappointed, so I said, "What do you mean?" She said that everyone gets discouraged, just like the day before, when I wanted to finish filing some reports but the janitor turned out the lights. I was mad and had to take the bus home, since Virginia had already left with her car. She could tell I was mad at the janitor, and she told me that's what being discouraged was.

"Oh, sure," I said, and I could see that I made her happy.

"Well, Harry," she said, "you want to learn how to stop being discouraged?"

I said, "Of course." I'm simple-minded, not stupid.

"You gotta write down what you're discouraged about, Harry," she told me, "and then it will go away and be all better." I said, "Good!" and she told me what to write down. *I miss Mother and Dad and Auntie and for 32 years all I do is work. I'm very tired and I don't want to go on. I'm sorry, Harry.* That's what I wrote on the piece of paper, and Virginia took it and put it in a drawer.

"Now you'll see, Harry," she said to me. "You won't be discouraged anymore."

Oh boy, that made me happy. I still remember the night I wrote that down, and I remember when Virginia brought me my old-fashioned later on. It tasted funny, but it was still good.

Well, I tell you, something must have been wrong with that drink, because the next thing I know I'm lying on a table in the funeral home and I don't

*Two hours  
after they buried me  
I began to feel  
very cramped,  
so I began to try to get  
out of the coffin.*

have any clothes on. Can you believe it, they thought I was dead! I once saw on television where some man they thought was dead sat up in this funeral home and scared everyone. It was the same with me, except I couldn't sit up. I tried, but it was like I was paralyzed. I couldn't sit up and I couldn't even help the man and lady dress me for my funeral in my black suit. But boy, when I think about it now, was I lucky! If I lived in a city instead of a small town they would have cut me up first to see what I died of, and then I really would have been in trouble, but the coroner said it was okay to bury me right away because my note proved it was suicide. Wasn't that dumb of him?

Anyway, it was a very nice funeral. Small but nice. Besides Virginia and Freddie and the minister, my supervisor was there, and I could hear her crying even if I couldn't see her. Joe was there, too, even though he isn't a real friend, and so was Auntie's lawyer. I heard the minister say that life's burdens were over for me and I would find eternal peace, and I heard Virginia say to the minister before the funeral even started how awful it was for her having a husband of only four months take poison. Wasn't that dumb of her? She didn't even know the difference between poison and funny-tasting whiskey.

Anyway, after the service, they put the coffin in a hearse and drove to the cemetery. Oh, boy, I sure am glad I told Auntie's lawyer that I wanted to be buried! When I got burned in the car so many years ago, I knew I didn't ever again want anything to do with fire, and the lawyer told that to Virginia when she wanted to have me cremated. He told her that my wishes were to be respected, that's what he said, and of course Virginia agreed.

Well, when I felt that dirt coming down on top of the coffin, I said to myself, "You've got yourself into a fine mess, Harry." I know now what was happening. I wasn't taking any breaths that you could see, not deep breaths or anything like that. It was like those religious men in India who put themselves into a trance and can stay buried for a long time. I even saw on television where some man could stay in a box in the bottom of a swimming pool. Well, that's what I was doing in that coffin.

I don't know about those religious men, but let me tell you, two hours after they buried me I began to feel very cramped, so I began to try to get out of the coffin. Oh boy, was I glad when I was finally able to move! And you can't say old Harry wasn't born under a lucky star. My funeral was late in the afternoon, so they didn't pack in as much dirt as usual. I guess they


were going to finish the job in the morning. But I still had to work so hard that, right near the end, my glass eye fell out. I didn't waste any time looking for it underground, let me tell you. I'm simple-minded but I'm no fool.

**W**hen I finally got out, I was a mess. And would you believe it, as long as I've lived in our town, I still got mixed up. Instead of heading for the cemetery road, I stumbled towards the woods behind the cemetery. I was tired, too, let me tell you. So I slept a few hours, and when I woke up, oh boy, did I feel good! It was cold and dark and rainy and it was very windy, but I didn't mind. The air smelled so good. I knew how happy Virginia and Freddie would be to find out that I wasn't really dead, so I started out for the house. By this time I knew where I was, and it was only thirty minutes from where I live.

I just walked and walked, and pretty soon I was at the house. I was glad to be out of the rain, let me tell you. I got the key from under the stairs. That was another good thing Virginia taught me. I used to lose keys and then I couldn't get into the house, but she showed me where to hide an extra key. I knew I looked a mess with my black funeral suit soaked and my limp worse because of the rain and my empty eye socket all red, but what difference did that make? Virginia would still be happy. I walked up the stairs real quietly so the surprise would be better than ever.

I could hear Virginia and Freddie laughing in the bedroom, and I wondered why they were so happy. Maybe they had already found out I was alive. That would have spoiled my surprise. But they were laughing about something else, I guess. I slowly turned the doorknob to the bedroom, and they became real quiet. I don't know who they were expecting, but it wasn't me. When I opened the door wide and shouted, "I'm back!" they both screamed. It was a funny thing that on a cold and rainy night, they were both in bed without any clothes on. I guess they were holding onto each other because they missed me so much, but they ruined my surprise because they kept on screaming.

It's nice that my wife and my best friend are together now. Of course, they're not really together, because when I go to visit them, they're in separate wings of this place they call a sanitarium. They both have white hair—maybe they drank some of that funny tasting whiskey, too—and Virginia isn't pretty anymore. Also they don't talk, which is kind of silly. I tell Virginia to write it down if she is discouraged and she will feel better, but she never listens to me.

I miss having Virginia at home, and I miss Freddie too, but you know what I miss most of all? Oh boy, will this surprise you! I miss those old-fashioned ones. But I don't drink anymore. After what happened to me, I know you can't trust whiskey. It can go bad on you. 

# The Tuck at the Foot of the Bed by Ardath Mayhar

A CAUTIONARY TALE ON THE IMPORTANCE—  
NAY, NECESSITY—OF MAKING YOUR BED.

**M**ama!" "What is it, dear?" This was spoken very innocently.

"Tuck sheet! P'eeel!" Two round dark eyes peered accusingly over the top edge of the sheet.

With a sigh, the mother tucked the sheet tightly beneath the side of the lower end of the mattress. "Why in the world you have to have that top sheet tucked that way is beyond me." But it was done now, and the eyes had closed in sleep.

"Barbara, you know you want to go. All the rest of the girls are going—Doctor Jarvis's daughter, the judge's girl. All the best families, too. I just don't understand you!"

"I just don't feel comfortable. I don't like sleeping on the floor, and they talk all night. I don't particularly like any of them, anyway. And you won't let Annie Wimple come spend the night with me."

"But her people are sharecroppers!"

Barbara sighed and pretended to busy herself with her lessons. Her mother would never understand. She had to sleep in a bed, an actual bed, with the sheet tucked tightly at the lower end. Otherwise there was no rest, no security for her in the dark hours of the night. Her mother, infuriated at the illogic of her actions, would have forced her to change, but for the intervention of her father.

"Everybody's got somethin' they're set on or afraid of," he had said. "This seems like a pretty small thing. Nothing unreasonable to take care of. You just let her tuck in her sheet like she wants to."

And that had been that.

"Jim, I . . . I have to tell you something. You'll think I'm silly. Mama always did. But before we marry I have to let you know, because it means a lot to me."

He looked down at her, his blue eyes quizzical. "You sleep with a teddy bear!" he teased. "No? Then you have a very large dog that's used to sharing your bed."

"Silly!" She stood on tiptoe and kissed his chin. "No. It's such a little thing. I have to have the top sheet tucked in tightly on my side of the bed. I have always had a terror . . ." she looked about to make certain that her mother was still in the kitchen . . . of having my foot hang over the edge of the bed. Now I know! I know! It's childish. It's Freudian something-or-other. But I cannot go to sleep without that sheet tucked in good and tight."

He smiled. "I think we can manage that . . . at least for now. Eventually I think I'll be able to talk you into realizing what causes that particular need. Then you won't need it anymore."

**Y**ou're right. I see it. It makes so much sense. Insecurity can do odd things to us, can't it? And to think I've spent all these years tucking in that sheet to keep my foot on the bed! It seems so silly now."

She sat on the bed and swung her feet onto the mattress. "It really is too hot for pulling up the top sheet, too. I know you've suffered from the heat, even with the fan going. You're a nice, patient person, love."

He took his place beside her, stretching himself on the cool linen. "I've got a bright wife." He chuckled. "I have had many a patient who couldn't see cause and



Illustration by Frances Jeller

effect nearly as soon or as clearly as you have done. Now you're free of that little worry. I suppose I see myself, actually, as some sort of Great Emancipator, freeing everyone I can from their niggling little slaveries to fears and phobias."

The lamp snapped off. The sound of crickets from their large lawn filled the night, and Barbara thought sleepily how good it was to have married for love and to have found money, too. She dozed, her foot edging near the side of the mattress.

It slipped over.

A long, thin hand, greyer than the moonlit room, snaked up from beneath the bed. The foot moved a bit, and the ankle drooped over the bed edge. The hand darted upward and fastened its cold grip about Barbara's leg.

She shrieked, struggling upward and clawing at Jim for stability.

"What? What's a matter?" he mumbled groggily

as her hand gripped his pajamas at the shoulder.

"It got me!" she screamed, and the cloth in her hand tore as she was dragged away from him, toward the edge of the bed.

Jim grabbed her hands. "I've got you. It's just a nightmare!" But his words caught in his throat as he saw her pulled away from him, and he was forced forward in order to hold on.

She went over the edge. He heard no thump, and her hands grew cold in his. "Barbara!" He hurled himself toward her side of the bed and looked over the mattress. She was disappearing into a kind of hole that swirled at the edges. His hands, as if paralyzed, loosed their grip, and she was sucked away. The hole pulled inward after her, and he found himself staring at the pattern of the carpet.

He huddled on the bed, shaking. The top sheet, folded neatly at the foot of the bed, gleamed accusingly at him in the light of the waning moon. 17



# *A Fragment of Fact*

*by Chris Massie*

A CURIOUS ENCOUNTER,

ONE NIGHT IN THE COUNTRY,

WITH A MOST PECULIAR MAN ...

OR SOMETHING RATHER LIKE ONE.

Starting from my home in Whitby, with the fanatical enthusiasm of youth I had traced out a cycling itinerary which would keep me in touch with the sea round the walls of England until I reached Blackpool, and from there I proposed to cut through the hills back home to Yorkshire.

Embarking on this ambitious program, I found myself one evening, between the hours of ten and eleven, cycling through the flat country of the sea reaches at the mouth of the Thames. While it was yet light, I had had fully communicated to me the melancholy desolation of that bog-held situation, heightened by the weird cries of some marsh bird I did not recognize.

The day had become sticky with heat: a sullen, breathless atmosphere which made cycling a conscious effort. Sweat oozed from my hair down my forehead, and past my ears, to trickle down the open neck of my cricket shirt. The journey was uncomfortable and uninteresting and, having taken a long bypath route, there was nothing much on the way to engage my attention.

When night fell, I had hoped for cooler conditions, being so near the sea and the river; but as is not unusual following such days, the night air became closer and more menacing. The air was so dense it seemed I was cutting through a solid surface; and indeed the conditions were something like this, for a low, clinging mist had come up from the marshland, and I could not see more than a few yards away by the light of my lamp.

I might have made the journey without considerable discomfort had I not become intolerably thirsty; but it was too late for an inn to be open, had I encountered one, which did not seem likely on this inhospitable bypath.

Growing weary of pedaling and feeling the need of sleep as well as drink, I got off my bike and made

my progression on foot. On either side of me stretched miles of dangerous bogland and, though closed in by the mist, I was fully aware of the treacherous, naked countryside through which I was passing.

Now I was on foot traveling slowly; the sticky, warm mist seemed to impede my path by definite resistance. I was tired, thirsty, sleepy, and uncertain of my whereabouts. It was a source of considerable irritation to me that I was almost in touch with the most populous city in the world where every comfort might be obtained at any hour, and yet, for the predicament I was in, I might have been lost in the Sahara.

I plodded on, feeling very stupid, regretting the foolhardy presumption which had turned night into day, and overtaxed my endurance. I reflected irritably on the folly of taking bypaths in a fantastically situated country like England. For the first time I deplored my solitude. I had made similar tours with one or more companions, but had found that, however amiable company might be, two ideas were not better than one on the road. Arguing at crossroads had a mean and spoiling effect on a cycling holiday. But the situation was getting on my nerves. I am one of those peculiar people who are not comfortable in wide, flat, open spaces; and though at this hour I could not see the dreary prospect, being closed in by the mist, I could feel it in every nerve of my body.

"I don't suppose there's a house round here for miles," I was thinking, when to my great relief I could see through the mist a bright patch to the right of the road which indicated, high up, the window of a lighted room.

I pushed on anxiously in that direction, and was soon aware that the light came from a house standing some distance back off the bypath which was approached by a wooden gate which I opened and against which I rested my bicycle.

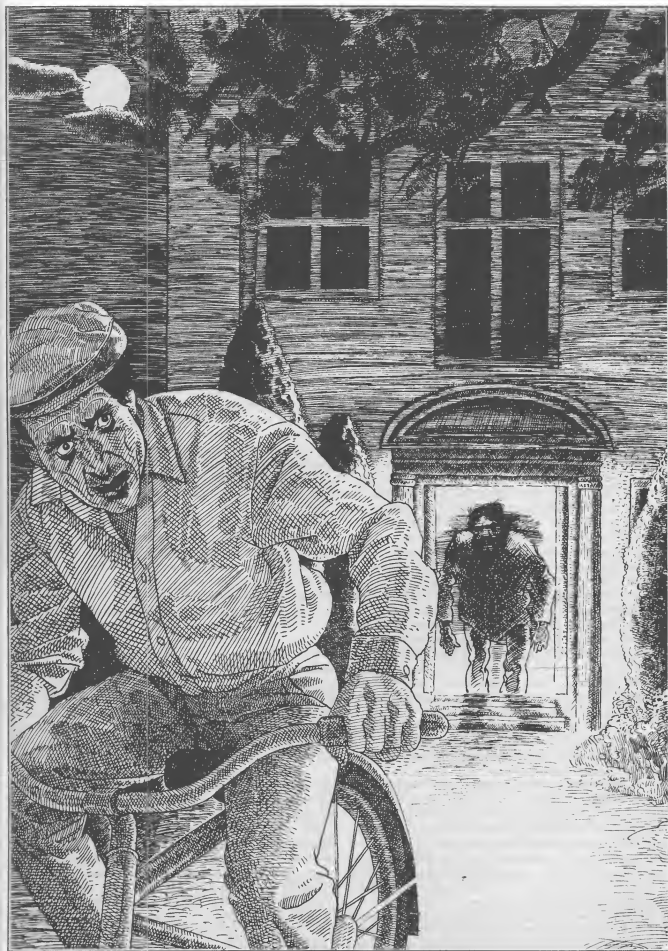


Illustration by Jose Reyes

## A Fragment of Fact



The way up to the house was hedged on either side by some tall evergreens. It was perhaps fifty yards to the main door, and such is the peculiarity of the abominable torture set up by thirst, that now I was within sight of quenching it, my sufferings from that cause were inconceivably intensified. What if I should fail to get a drink after all? On that short journey I dwelt on pints, quarts, gallons of ice-cold water from a deep well, and in imagination I was quaffing greedily.

As I drew near, I saw the head and shoulders of a man, enormously magnified, pass across the window blind. The shadow had a downward projection, as if he had made a sudden sweeping movement to the floor. I rang a queer, old-fashioned bell which had to be pulled out and let go. A swift peal clattered through the house, which subsided with the lessening vibration to one or two isolated sounds before it ceased.

I stood there, self-conscious, foolishly remembering having made a similar request for water when a child, and how graciously I had been received by a good woman, and accommodated with two juicy apples to follow my refreshing will. But I was a young man now and the hour was late.

There was no stir in response to my ringing. Impatient and desperate with my need, I rang again, and listened once more for those last, halting reverberations. This time I had succeeded. A foot was on the stair. A moment later the door opened, and a voice out of the darkness, for there was no light in the hall, asked, "What do you want?"

"I have been held up in the mist," I replied. "I am very thirsty and would be glad of a drink of water."

The man stood for a moment as if in deep thought. It was then I noticed his enormous proportions, not only in height, but girth and shoulder span. He was well over six feet tall even in the attitude in which he stood, with head bowed and shoulders humped. His long arms hung in a dragging, helpless fashion at his sides, like an ape's.

"Come in," he said. "Come into the light."

I followed him, and he touched a door and said, "Go and wait for me in there. I will be back again soon with what you want."

The room I walked into was only feebly lit, giving a twilight effect. It was a large room, but very barely furnished. Though it was obviously a dining or sitting room, a deal table took the center of the room, and there were three Windsor chairs in various positions. There were no pictures, and nothing of comfort and pleasure in the apartment. I thought by this evidence that the house was unoccupied and that the man I had seen was the caretaker.

He returned in a few moments holding a heavy bowl in both hands, and as I was still standing in the middle of the room, he brought it straight forward and

placed it in my hands, so that now I was holding it in precisely the manner he had done a moment before. It seemed enormous for a drinking vessel, despite the thirst which oppressed me. I looked down into the water, and saw round the edges of the bottom a dark stain that might have been a sediment of mud.

At that moment I looked up at him in vexation, and in the dim light I saw his face. The huge size of the man suggested the lineaments of a gorilla, and I expected to be revolted by his appearance; but he was not like that at all. He wore a beard which to the worst of faces adds a venerable sort of dignity. His brows were heavy and overhanging, so that his eyes were invisible in these cavernous projections. His nose was long, with a melancholy downward depression, and his mouth hidden beneath a drooping moustache. "This must have been a mistake," I said, indicating the water.

At once he reached out with his immense hands and took the bowl away from me. Without a word of explanation he left the room, and I could hear him descending stairs.

I was alarmed, and inclined to make my escape from the house in his absence, for I had noticed, as the bowl swung round in his hands, the word DOG on its glazed earthenware surface.

In the state of thirst which tortured me, I was appalled that this unmannered giant should be so lacking in all human consideration as to offer me a dog's trough from which to drink. And not a clean one. But he had returned before I could come to a decision, and this time he was bearing a jug and a half-pint tumbler.

He set them on the table in front of me, and invited me to sit down. When I had done so, he sat down opposite me on the other side of the table. He looked across at me in the dim light and made this extraordinary statement: "Between your first ringing at the bell and your second my wife died. I was attending to her upstairs. That will explain any delay in coming down to you." The words were uttered simply, as a matter of course, in a deep but gentle voice with unexpected culture in its phrasing.

For a moment I had nothing to reply. Between the first ringing and the second I had been thinking of that good woman who, when I was a child, had supplemented a cooling drink with two juicy apples; and precisely at that moment a woman had died. This, for some unknown reason, seemed to invest the information with a special horror. I felt myself a most insolent intruder.

"I humbly beg your pardon," I said, getting up. "That is most terrible news. I ought not to have blundered into the house in this fashion. I will be going now, and thank you for your hospitality."

He stood up when I did, and with a quick movement preceded me to the door, lifting his hand in a man-

*"Do you mean that  
your wife  
is dead,  
and  
lying at her feet  
is a dead dog?"*

ner which suggested I should be seated again.

"Don't go," he said. "I am glad of your company. There is no one else in the house. And I'm not used to this kind of thing. Perhaps it is a trifle unusual in a man of my age, but this is the first time I have seen death happen to . . . to a human being. . . . It so happens that her dog died only this morning."

"And your wife has died almost immediately after the dog?" I asked for no particular reason.

"Yes," he replied. "My wife was very fond of it; indeed, she idolized it."

"Was your wife's death sudden? I mean, were you expecting it?" I asked.

"Yes, I was expecting it. Both my wife and the dog were very ill." He hesitated a moment, then continued, "When I say I expected it, I was not expecting it at that moment although she was so ill. I had been intent on her condition, trying to make her position in bed more comfortable, when I heard your first ring. My mind wandered at the psychological moment. It's often so. At the psychological moment we are not there; our minds are floating about in time. That is life's illusion; so much of it is lost in ranging back over the past or trying to explore the future. Then we look at death, and it is all over."

His remarks were too metaphysical and self-conscious for me to answer. I merely nodded and sat down again. It was ridiculous to stand in the middle of the room and listen to such conversation. He also returned to his chair.

"Between your first ring and your second, she died," he went on. "I had been nursing both of them. I mean I was attending the sick dog up to the moment when it died."

"What sort of dog was it?" I asked.

"A sheepdog," he replied. "One of those grey-black, shaggy fellows with the peculiar white-ringed eyes that seem blind, but are far from being so."

"Oh yes," I replied casually, but I was suddenly oppressed by a breathtaking sensation of unreality.

He sat before me in idle helplessness, observing me occasionally, and then turning a glance towards the door.

"When the dog died, it was impossible to deceive her about it," he went on. "At all times of the day she asked where it was, and implored me to bring it to her. It's lying there now, at the foot of the bed."

"Do you mean that your wife is dead, and lying at her feet is a dead dog?" I asked. He had just said that, but the picture it brought to my mind was horrifying in the extreme.

"She made me place it there," he said. "Her wish was that they should be placed in the same coffin."

"But no undertaker on earth—" I began.

"I know," he replied. "I know. But it was her

last wish, and I cannot bring myself to bury the dog. I cannot sum up sufficient courage to take it away from her feet."

"Don't you think," I asked, for the situation was worrying me, "don't you think you ought to be upstairs with her instead of here, if

only to make sure she's dead? . . . And really I must go; I have an appointment."

Another thing had occurred to me.

"You ought to go for a doctor," I told him.

"Shall I call on the first doctor I come across on my way? What's the name of this house?"

He made no reply at once, then he said, "I must think the matter over carefully. You have no idea what it is like to live in this lonely situation. It was no more than a bond to keep them together until they died. Why should I go upstairs again? I have done my part. I shall be going to the village tomorrow as I have always gone, to get the meat and vegetables, and I may call on a doctor then."

"May!" I almost screamed. "You simply must!"

"Must, then," he concurred.

"I'm sorry," I said. The words seemed particularly futile, utterly absurd.


He did not reply. He was resting his head on his hands, with his elbows on the table.

"I must be going now," I said. "Thank you for the drink."

Again he did not reply or even look up. I passed out of the room into the dark passage, and very quietly opened the front door and closed it after me. I dashed down through the dark evergreens, and jumped on my bicycle. As I was getting up speed, I heard the pad of feet and a snarling behind me. The next moment the heavy bulk of a big animal caught me broadside on and nearly unseated me. As the handles swung, my lamp was brought round to the creature's face, and I saw a pair of savage eyes. It was a sheepdog.

He came at me again, and lifting my foot from the pedal, I jabbed at his nose with my heel; but it was a push rather than a kick, and he was not hurt. He bared his teeth and leapt at my handlebars, and the lamp, coming off its fittings, dropped in the road and went out; but he had fallen without getting a grip of me. Before he had completely recovered, I rode on, and for a mile I heard him pattering behind.

"That must have been another sheepdog," I reflected. An involuntary shudder shook me so that I swerved on my bicycle; but this was not on account of my affray with the dog, but because that strange man with unkempt hair and beard looked so much like a sheepdog himself.

I did not tell my story to anyone until I reached home. It has remained with me ever since, and from time to time I turn it over in my mind in an effort to clarify and rationalize it; but it remains insoluble. 

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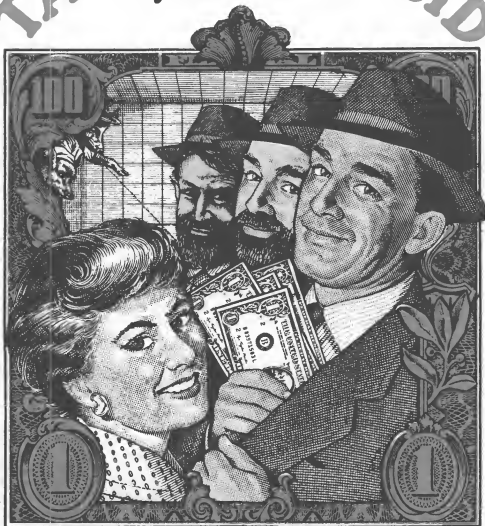
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MAY '81: Original fiction by Robert Silverberg, Joe Haldeman, Roger Zelazny, Spider Robinson, & others; Peter Straub interview; Tanith Lee novelette; classic Serling script, *The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street*; Show-by-Show #2; preview of *The Hand*. JUNE: Stephen King's new thriller, *The Jaunt*; Robert Bloch interview; two long-lost tales by Anthony Boucher; classic TZ script, *The After Hours*; 100 Years of Fantasy Illustration; *Outland* preview; Show-by-Show #3. JULY: A dozen new tales by Robert Silverberg, Robert Sheckley, Ron Goulart, Charles L. Grant, Stanley Schmidt, & others; *Superman's* Richard Donner on directing *The Twilight Zone*; Serling's tv chiller, *The Eye of the Beholder*; Show-by-Show #4. SEPTEMBER: Richard Matheson interview; new fiction by John Sladek, Gary Brandner, & Parke Godwin; tv history, *Forerunners of 'The Twilight Zone'*; Serling classic, *Time Enough at Last*; Dr. Van Helsing on fear of ghosts; Show-by-Show #6. OCTOBER: Richard Matheson interview, pt. 2; Serling's *The Big Tall Wish*; preview of *The Beast Within*; tales by Robert Sheckley, Pamela Sargent, and George Clayton Johnson; Show-by-Show #7. NOVEMBER: New tales by Tanith Lee, Thomas Disch, Ramsey Campbell, Stanley Schmidt, & Clark Howard; John Saul interview; TZ script, *Death's Head Revisited*; preview of *Halloween II*; Dr. Van Helsing on the joy of terror; Show-by-Show #8. DECEMBER: An outspoken interview with Harlan Ellison; *The Midnight Sun*, TZ classic script; M.R. James profile & James classic, *The Ash-Tree*; *Quest for Fire* preview; 8 new tales of humor & horror; Show-by-Show #9. JANUARY '82: Rod Serling recalls *My Most Memorable Christmas*; Frank Belknap Long recalls H.P. Lovecraft; *Ghost Story* preview; fiction by Robert Sheckley, Reginald Bretnor, Parke Godwin, Connie Willis, & John Morressy; *The Night of the Meek*, Santa in TZ classic; LeFanu profile & classic tale; Show-by-Show #10. MARCH: Fritz Leiber interview, plus Leiber classic; 8 new tales by Ron Goulart, Robert Vardeman, & others; on the set of *The Thing*; preview of *Stab*, with Roy Scheider & Meryl Streep; Serling's *A Passage for Trumpet*; Show-by-Show #12. MAY: Peter Straub's new novelette, *The General's Wife*; Terry Gilliam interview; on the *Creepshow* set with Stephen King & George Romero; Serling's *The Four of Us Are Dying*, plus George Clayton Johnson's original story; 7 new tales by Connie Willis, Kit Reed, & others; *Dark Crystal* preview; Tierney's *Doomsday Poems*; Show-by-Show #14. JUNE: Richard Matheson's unseen TZ script, *The Doll*; Philip K. Dick interview; *Blade Runner* preview; *Fantasy in Clay* photo feature; 9 new tales by Pamela Sargent, Richard Christian Matheson, & others; Show-by-Show #15. JULY: Stories by Robert Silverberg, Joan Aiken, & Joe Lansdale; Stephen King on films, Thomas Disch on books; Robertson Davies interview & story; *Ghostly Britain* photos; preview of *The Thing*; Serling's *100 Yards Over the Rim*; making *The Last Horror Film*; Show-by-Show #16. AUGUST: Poe & Robert Bloch together in *The Lighthouse*; Douglas Heyes, TZ director, interviewed; funhouse photo-tour; 7 new stories; a look at *Tron*, *Poltergeist*, and *E.T.*; Serling's *The Trade-Ins*; Show-by-Show #17. SEPTEMBER: Long-lost Serling radio script; previews of *Creepshow* and *Something Wicked*; Paul Schrader interview; special Arthur Machen section; 7 new tales; new horror quiz; Show-by-Show #18. OCTOBER: Nicholas Meyer interview on *Star Trek*; Ireland's ghostly mansions; tales by Avram Davidson and Robert Sheckley; Serling's *In Praise of Pip*; Show-by-Show #19. NOVEMBER: John Carpenter interview; Stephen King on *The Evil Dead*; *Halloween III* preview; Serling's *Quality of Mercy*; 8 great tales for *Halloween*; Show-by-Show #20. DECEMBER: *Living Doll*, Charles Beaumont's TZ classic; Ridley Scott's interview; L. P. Hartley profile; Xtro preview; 8 new stories; Show-by-Show #21. JAN.-FEB. '83: Color fantasy-film wrap-up; Roald Dahl interview; Serling's lost *Christmas Carol*, plus *One for the Angels*; E. T. at the U.N.; Show-by-Show #22. MARCH-APRIL: Contest prizewinners; Serling's own *Twilight Zone* movie; Colin Wilson interview; *The Hunger* preview; TZ script & story by Richard Matheson; Show-by-Show #23.

# TAKEOVER BID

by Andrew Weiner



Collage by Harry Banks

## MONEY, THEY SAY, MAKES THE MAN. WHAT, THEN, DID THE STOCK SHARES MAKE?

*Starter home. Cute 2 bedroom cottage on well-treed street. Close to stores, transit. Good financing. Vendor has bought. \$149,000.*

**B**aker snorted in disgust and threw the real estate section across the length of the living room. It was no great distance.

Starter home, \$149,000! The world was going nuts.

Baker and his wife had a combined income of over \$45,000 per year. They had over \$10,000 in savings, and the way things were going, they were never, ever going to own a home.

When Baker had married Janice, six months before, she had moved into his cramped one-bedroom apartment from her own studio apartment as a temporary measure. A temporary measure that was beginning to look depressingly permanent. There was simply no way they could swing buying a house, not

at those prices and at those mortgage rates.

Thirty years old, Baker brooded obsessively. And I'm never going to own a home.

His reverie was interrupted by the telephone.

"Dickie my boy," said the voice at the other end of the wire. "How are you doing?"

Baker was in no real mood to talk to his old friend and former squash partner, Bob Lomax. The man was so depressingly, so relentlessly cheerful. As indeed he had every right to be. Lomax, unlike Baker, had bought a house years ago, before the market started to go bananas, then traded up and up, ever upwards, doubling and trebling his initial stake.

Moreover, as a stockbroker for McGraw-Peterson, one of the largest firms in the city, Lomax had parlayed a series of stock tips into an ever burgeoning portfolio.

Money played favorites. That was what Baker had long ago concluded. Some people, like Lomax,

# TAKEOVER BID

seemed to have a magnetic attraction for the stuff. Others, like himself, never came within miles of serious money.

Oh, Lomax had passed on plenty of tips to him in the past. But he had been too timid, not to say underfinanced, to take advantage of them. You needed money, that was the problem. And whatever money Baker managed to hold onto was earmarked for the deposit on that ever receding house.

"Awful," he told Lomax, "since you ask."

"Well, brighten up, Dickie. I bear glad tidings. I'm going to let you in on one of the sweetest deals I've seen in years. A word to the wise, Dickie boy. Advanced Hurgorvia."

"Advanced Hurgorvia?" Baker echoed. "What's that?"

"It's where the smart money is going, my boy."

"It's a company? I never even heard of it."

"Naturally not. That's the whole point. It's a brand-new junior. Just incorporated. In fact, it's still trading over the counter. Unlisted. A chance to get in ahead of the crowds."

"Unlisted?"

"Not for long, though. They're negotiating in New York and Chicago right now. But that's what makes it an absolute steal. Ninety cents bid, a dollar asked right now. Started in at fifty cents yesterday morning. We can see it at nine, ten bucks by the fall."

It was now mid-July. Baker felt a mixture of hope and greed begin to stir in his stomach.

"Ten bucks," he echoed. "What kind of company is it?"

"Oh, natural resources. Mining, like that. Zinc, I think. Or was it potassium? I've got the handout here somewhere." Sound of shuffling papers. "Or was it oil services? Anyway, can't seem to lay my hand on it right now. Anyway, who cares? The point is, it's going up. Up, up, up."

"Advanced Hurgorvia?" mused Baker. "What kind of a name is that?"

"Who knows?" Lomax said, with a tinge of irritation. "Who cares? Let's not get ourselves bogged down in irrelevant details. The point is, this one was made for you. This is your chance to get in on the ground floor. You were telling me the other day that you wanted to buy a house. Good old Hurgorvia is going to buy it for you. Can I put you down for, say, ten thousand? I'm in for twenty-five thousand myself."

"Ten thousand? I don't have that kind of money."

"And there's no seller's commission on unlisted stocks," Lomax continued relentlessly. "Of course, it'll be listed by the time you sell, which is where I'll get my cut. But basically I'm just trying to help you out."

"Bob, I can't do it. All I have is ten thousand dollars, and that's for the house. Janice would kill me if I used it for something like this."

"Ah, how is the little woman?" Lomax asked.

"Well, I can see the problem. But I certainly wouldn't let Marsha influence my investment decisions. The fact is that women, bless their hearts, simply don't understand this investment stuff as well as you or I. If you want to get ahead in this world you've got to be prepared to take a few risks. Not that there's any real risk here. It's a sure thing. Of course, officially I can't promise you that it's going to go up. But unofficially I can tell you that you'd be crazy to pass this up."

The hell with it, Baker thought suddenly. What good is \$10,000 anyway? Time to do what the smart boys do.

He should, of course, have waited to consult Janice. But Janice was at the dentist, and in any case he knew very well what she would say.

"All right," he said. "Let's do it. Put me down for ten thousand."

The argument was, as he had expected, ferocious. It lasted on and off for several days. But then, as the shares began to move up, Janice was forced to hold her peace.

He scrutinized the business pages of the morning paper.

"It's up again," he told her. "Closed at one point forty to one point fifty."

"Sell it," Janice said. "Take the money and run."

"Are you kidding? After it went up fifty cents in a week? This is going to make us rich. Or at least, less poor. This is our house we're talking about."

It was time to get to work. He got up from the breakfast table and kissed Janice goodbye.

She grimaced and rubbed her cheek. "Are you going to work without shaving?"

"I did shave," he said, surprised. "I'm sure I did."

He stroked his cheek.

"A bit of a stubble," he admitted. "Must have been a blunt blade. I'll do it again."

**T**he following week Baker received a letter from the corporate offices of Advanced Hurgorvia. The address was a post office box in Seattle, Washington.

*Dear New Shareholder (it read),*

*We are delighted to welcome you to the Hurgorvian Family. We treasure all of our cousins, no matter how large or small their investment with us. We are thrilled that you have demonstrated such confidence in us at such an early stage in our development plans. Rest assured that your confidence will be amply rewarded.*

*We have big and exciting plans for the year ahead, and you will be learning of these plans at the appropriate time. Once again, your participation is greatly appreciated.*

*Yours sincerely,  
Kori Yakovaria  
Chairman of the Board*

Time to shave again.  
That would be the third  
time today. His doctor  
was just as baffled about it  
as he was, but said it was  
nothing to worry about.

"We treasure all of our cousins," Janice repeated, "It's a little flaky, isn't it?"

"I don't think so," Baker said. "I think it's nice. Makes you feel welcome. I mean, it's the personal touch. You wouldn't get a letter like that from AT&T."

"AT&T pays a regular dividend," Janice said pointedly. They don't need the personal touch. And what sort of name is Kori Yakovaria?"

"Well, you know what they say about immigrants," Baker said. "All that entrepreneurial drive. Won't stop until they conquer all before them. He sounds like a take-charge sort of guy to me."

"Flaky," Janice said again.

"Did I tell you or did I tell you?" asked Lomax from the other end of the telephone.

Baker put down the report he had been working on.

"It hit three dollars?"

"Better."

"Three fifty?"

"Three sixty. We listed it this morning in New York. Took off like a rocket."

"Did they strike zinc, or something?"

"Silver, isn't it? Whatever. There's certainly been some promising discovery. The point is, we're winners."

Baker stroked his cheek absently. Time to shave again. That would be the third time today. For the past week he had been bringing his razor with him to work. His doctor was just as baffled about it as he was, but said it was nothing to worry about. Just some sort of freak thing. Either it would stop, or he would have to get used to it.

He was seriously thinking about growing a beard.

"I don't know, Bob," he said. "I was thinking of getting out while I'm ahead. Janice—"

"Ridiculous," Lomax said. "I see no ceiling on this one. Why, we could top twenty dollars."

"Twenty dollars?"

For that kind of money he could buy a house outright, and still have some spare change.

"Well, maybe I'll hang in there for a while," he said. "Just for a few more weeks."

"Sell it," Janice told him. "Don't get greedy. Sell it."

"It hit four sixty today," he told her, "then slipped back to four ten. But it was four thirty at the close. The trend is still up."

"Sell it," she said. "We already have enough for a deposit."

"You're thinking too small," he told her. "You just don't understand these things the way I do. I've been right so far, haven't I?"

She had to admit that he was right.

"Let's go to bed," he said.

"Ouch," she said a few minutes later.

"I just shaved," he said.

"It's your knee," she said. "It's all rough and scaly."

He felt his knee. Then he turned the light on again to examine it.

"You're right," he said. "They both are. In fact my legs are, too."

From ankle to crotch his legs were rough and dried up and scaly.

"Must be some sort of rash," he said. "I didn't notice anything this morning. Maybe it was something I ate."

There was a further communication from Advanced Hurgorvia in his morning mail.

Dear Shareholder,

*Great things are happening, as you are no doubt aware. All of us in Hurgorvia are absolutely thrilled and peraverated at the speed at which the business community has taken us to heart. And our advance has only just begun!*

*Watch for exciting new developments.*

*Hurgorvia Forever!*

*Your brother,*

*Koria Yakovaria*

"Now that is flaky," Janice said.

"I don't know," Baker said. "It sort of makes you feel good, to be part of something growing. Can't you just feel that entrepreneurial spirit? It's like George Gilder says . . ."

"And what on earth," Janice asked, "does he mean when he says that he's 'thrilled and peraverated'?"

"I don't know," Baker said. "I expect that it's just a misprint. Maybe he means *pleased*."

"That's a funny sort of misprint," Janice said.

"Tell me," said the skin specialist, "how long have you had these marks on your back?"

"My back?" he echoed. "I'm here about the rash on my legs."

"Your back is covered with large purplish marks. Does this hurt?"

He pressed down, at first lightly, then increased the pressure.

"No," Baker said. "What is it, doctor?"

"Beats the hell out of me," the skin specialist said cheerfully. "Never saw anything like it."

"Is it cancer?"



# TAKEOVER BID

"If it is, they'll have to name it after me. Or you, of course. Because I never saw anything like it. But I really don't think you have to worry on that score. We better run some tests to see what it is."

"And what about my legs?"

Baker's legs looked awful. The top skin had now flaked away, leaving a surface of hard, greenish scales.

"That's another new one on me, I'm afraid. But it's got to be some sort of allergic reaction. I'd like Feldman, down at the General, to take a look at this. He's the best allergist in town. Could be a paper in this for both of us. Of course, it *might* just be nerves. The mind can play funny tricks on the body, you know. Are you under a lot of stress at work?"

"Not really."

"Having financial problems?"

"Not in the least," he said. "No problems on that score."

**B**aker glimmed. He glimmed reckfully at first, but then with increasing conviction. He glimmed toward his *vevorukk*, across the dry and rocky plain, under the purplish sun . . .

How ruminid it was to glim!

The phone rang, interrupting this idyll.

"Kerveryan," he said in irritation, reaching an arm out of bed toward the phone. His arm, like his chest and back, was now covered with the purplish marks. Lately he had taken to wearing pyjamas to bed to spare Janice, and himself, the sight of him. But the marks also covered the back of his hand.

"What did you say?" Janice asked, stirring beside him in the bed.

"I don't know," he said. "I don't know what I said."

"You said something like 'kerveryan,'" she said.

He shook his head in bafflement.

"Hello," he said into the phone.

"Dickie, it's Bob. And we're listed in London and Tokyo. Just came over the wire. Big international push. People can't get enough of the stuff. All high tech stocks are pretty hot, but good old Advanced Hurgorvia is the hottest. Broke six bucks in New York."

"High tech? I thought they were into resources."

"Oh, diversification, I suppose. Anyway, the point is I think you owe me lunch. At the best restaurant in town."

Baker realized guiltily that he had not seen Lomax in months. Since he had given up squash, their only contact had been over the phone.

"You're right," he said. "How about Tuesday?"

"Ah, that's not good for me. Doctor's appointment. How's Wednesday?"

"Sorry," Baker said, "I've got a doctor's

appointment, too."

"Well, just as long as you're healthy. How about Friday?"

"Friday is fine."

**I**t was a two-mile walk from his office to the restaurant Lomax had selected, but Baker covered the distance in an effortless fifteen-minute jog without even raising a sweat.

Lately he had felt an almost boundless energy. His legs felt as strong as iron. His lungs seemed to have limitless capacity. His heart was steady as a rock. But for his various skin ailments, he was in better health than he had ever been before.

It was just one more detail to puzzle the doctors. So far all the allergy tests had proved negative. The purplish marks on his torso and armed had begun to turn mauve.

He saw Bob Lomax heading toward the restaurant from the opposite direction from a distance of twelve blocks. Lately, again, his eyesight had become astonishingly good, and he had abandoned the glasses he wore for driving. His optician had explained that sometimes this happened as you got older.

He noted that Lomax, like himself, was wearing a beard these days. He was also, on a warm August day, wearing leather gloves.

"Why the gloves?" Baker asked as they waited to be shown to their table.

"It's a bit embarrassing, actually," Lomax said. "Look."

He pulled off the gloves. Large mauve marks covered the backs of his hands.

"Do you have those all over your body?"

"As a matter of fact, yes. Except for my legs . . ."

The waitress came to show them to their table.

Lomax had indeed picked one of the best restaurants in town. It was packed with movers and shakers from the city's financial district.

"Hey," Baker said, "isn't that Michael Dawson? Except I didn't know he had a beard."

Dawson, chief executive of one of the city's biggest banks, was sitting at a window table. His luncheon companion was also heavily bearded.

"We're trend-setters, Dickie boy. Although to tell you the truth, I only grew it because—"

"Because you had to shave six times a day," Baker completed.

"How did you know that?"

Baker held out his hands, palms downwards, in answer.

"Strange," Lomax said. "And something stranger. Did you notice that Karns is wearing gloves?"

"Must be something going around," Baker said. He picked up the menu.

In the mail the next day, Baker received his final written communication from Advanced Hurgorvia.

Dear Brother in Hurgorvia,

As you look at the world through new eyes, you see it alive with promise, bursting with things yet to become. Ah, the dawning of the age of Hurgorvia! Ah, the reglipping of our heritage! As you have joined us, so we will join you, to build a newer and greater Hurgorvia.

With appreciation for your magnificent support. Looking forward to glimming with you,  
Hurgorvia Supreme!  
Kori Yakovaria

"Very flaky," Janice said. "In fact, complete gobbledegook. In fact, I would say that these people are out to lunch. You had better sell those shares right now before it's too late. If it isn't too late already."

Baker did not respond.

"The reglipping of our heritage," she repeated. "Looking forward to glimming with you." What does it mean?

"I don't know," Baker said, scratching absently at his beard. "And yet in some way I can't really explain, it seems to make a kind of sense."

The report was not going well. Baker was bored with the whole exercise. He longed to be outside in the open air. In fact he longed to be out of the city, to enjoy the still lush countryside of this lush little planet, to reglip and to cororate and of course to glim . . .

He shook his head as if to clear it. Lately he had been having such strange thoughts, such strange dreams. He had been thinking of seeing a psychiatrist about it. And yet another part of his mind told him that he had nothing to worry about.

The phone rang.

"Two-for-one stock split," Lomax said without preamble. "You now own twenty-thousand shares. Last trade at four ten. Hurgorvia forever! Isn't that just heristic?"

"What did you say?"

"I said, 'Isn't that just . . . heristic.'" There was a pause. "You'll have to excuse me. Can't think what I meant. Anyway, there's something else. A hot and heavy rumor that Advanced Hurgorvia are preparing—"

"Let me guess," Baker said. "A takeover bid, right?"

"Right," Lomax said. "How did you know?"

"Who for?" Baker asked. "AT&T? IBM?"

"Not quite," Lomax said. "But give them time. This is a medium-size mining group. How did you know?"

"How do I know about heristic? Or vevoroukks? Or glimming?"

"Glimming," Lomax repeated. "Wasn't there



something in that rather strange letter . . ."

"Looking forward to glimming with you," Baker said. "And we will be. Pretty soon now. It all fits together now."

"I don't understand."

"But I do," Baker said. "I understand very well. In fact, I think I've understood it for a long time without wanting to admit it. We've been had, Bob. We've been invaded. Through the backdoor. Invaded by Hurgorvia, whatever that is. Some kind of dried-up, rocky, dusty faraway planet."

"Invaded? What do you mean, invaded?"

"Oh," Baker said, "not like in the movies. No space ships. No bombs. No threats. But invaded all the same. There are better ways to invade a country. Or a world. Economic control, that's how you do it. Nice and clean. You can even use other people's money to do it. The Hurgorvians are going to buy us up, Bob. Lock, stock, and barrel. And then they're going to move in. In fact, they're already here. We're here, Bob. We're Hurgorvians now. We're the advance guard."

"Wait a minute," Lomax said. "I didn't sign up to become a Hurgorvian. All I did was buy a few shares. They have no right to do this to us. It's monstrous. It's outrageous. It's . . . illegal."

"By whose laws, Bob? Maybe in Hurgorvia you become what you own. Who knows? In fact, isn't there something in the Book of Yoruka—"

"The what?"

"The Book of Yoruka," Baker repeated. "I wonder what the hell that is? Well, we'll know soon enough. Anyway, sue them if you like. See where it gets you. The point is, they did it. And we bought it. We signed up. We're brothers in Hurgorvia now. Or we soon will be."

"I'm going to complain to the Securities Commission," Lomax said.

"I don't think you will," Baker said. "After all, we've been deliberately ignoring the obvious for weeks. Obviously they didn't want us to know until now. And if they're letting us know now, then it's probably too late to do anything about it."

"I'm going to put in a sell order."

"Too late, I think," Baker said. "Much too late. You might as well just enjoy your dividends. Because we're too far gone. In fact, I think I have an irresistible urge to glim right now. Right here and now in my office. It's all I can do to fight it down."

"But what is glimming?"

"I don't know," Baker said. "But I think I'm about to find out." [E]

# LISTEN

by Joe R. Lansdale

## INVISIBILITY—AS THE PSYCHIATRIST DISCOVERED— WAS JUST A STATE OF MIND.

**T**he psychiatrist wore blue, the color of Merguson's mood.

"Mr. . . . uh?" the psychiatrist asked.

"Merguson. Floyd Merguson."

"Sure, Mr. . . ."

"Merguson."

"Right. Come into the office."

It was a sleek office full of sleek black chairs the texture of a lizard's underbelly. The walls were decorated with paintings of explosive color; a metal-drip sculpture resided on the large walnut desk. And there was the couch, of course, just like in the movies. It was a chocolate-brown with throw-pillows at each end. It looked as if you could drift down into it and disappear in its softness.

They sat in chairs, however. The psychiatrist on his side of the desk, Merguson on the client's side.

The psychiatrist was a youngish man with a fine touch of premature white at the temples. He looked every inch the intelligent professional.

"Now," the psychiatrist said, "what exactly is your problem?"

Merguson fiddled his fingers, licked his lips, and looked away.

"Come on, now. You came here for help, so let's get started."

"Well," Merguson said cautiously. "No one takes me seriously."

"Tell me about it."

"No one listens to me. I can't take it anymore. Not another moment. I feel like I'm going to explode if I don't get help. Sometimes I just want to yell out, *Listen to me!*"

Merguson leaned forward and said confidentially, "Actually, I think it's a disease. Yeah, I know how that sounds, but I believe it is, and I believe I'm approaching the terminal stage of the illness."

"I got this theory that there are people others don't notice, that they're almost invisible. There's just something genetically wrong with them that causes them to go unnoticed. Like a little clock that ticks inside them, and the closer it gets to the hour hand the more unnoticed these people become."

"I've always had the problem of being shy and introverted—and that's the first sign of the disease. You either shake it early or you don't. If you don't, it just grows like cancer and consumes you. With me the problem gets worse every year, and lately by the moment."

"My wife, she used to tell me it's all in my head, but lately she doesn't bother. But let me start at the first, when I finally decided I was ill, that the illness was getting worse and that it wasn't just in my head, not some sort of complex."

"Just last week I went to the butcher, the butcher I been going to for ten years. We were never chummy, no one has ever been chummy to me but my wife, and she married me for my money. I was at least visible then; I mean you had to go to at least some effort to ignore me, but God, it's gotten worse . . ."

"I'm off the track. I went to the butcher, asked him for some choice cuts of meat. Another man comes in while I'm talking to him and asks for a pound of hamburger. Talks right over me, mind you. What happens? You guessed it. The butcher starts shooting the breeze with the guy, wraps up a pound of hamburger and hands it over to him!"

"I ask him about my order and he says, Oh, I forgot."

Merguson lit a cigarette and held it between unsteady fingers after a long deep puff. "I tell you, he waited on three other people before he finally got to me, and then he got my order wrong, and I must have told him three times, at least."

"It's more than I can stand, Doc. Day after day people not noticing me, and it's getting worse all the time. Yesterday I went to a movie and I asked for a ticket and it happened. I mean I went out completely, went transparent, invisible. I mean completely. This was the first time. The guy just sits there behind the glass, like he's looking right through me. I asked him for a ticket again. Nothing."

"I was angry, I'll tell you. I just walked right on toward the door. Things had been getting me down bad enough without not being able to take off and go to a movie and relax. I thought I'd show him. Just walk right in. Then they'd sell me a ticket."

"No one tried to stop me. No one seemed to know I was there. I didn't bother with the concession stand. No one would have waited on me anyway."

"Well, that was the first time of the complete fadeouts. And I remember when I was leaving the movie, I got this funny idea. I went into the bathroom and looked in the mirror. I swear to you, Doc, on my mother's grave, there wasn't an image in the mirror. I gripped the sink to keep upright, and when I looked up again I was fading in, slowly. Well, I didn't stick



Illustration by Bill Logan

around to see my face come into view. I left there and went straight home.

"That afternoon was the corker. My wife, Connie, I know she's been seeing another man. Why not? She can't see me. And when she can I don't have the presence of a one-watt bulb. I came home from the movie and she's all dressed up and talking on the phone.

"I say, 'Who you talking to?'"

Mergusson crushed his cigarette out in the ash-tray on the psychiatrist's desk. "Doesn't say doodly squat, Doc. Not a word. I'm mad as hell. I go upstairs and listen on the extension. It's a man, and they're planning a date.

"I broke in over the line and started yelling at them. Guess what? The guy says, 'Do you hear a buzzing or something or other?' 'No,' she says. And they go right on with their plans.

"I was in a homicidal rage. I went downstairs and snatched the phone out of her hand and threw it across the room. I wrecked furniture and busted up some lamps and expensive pottery. Just made a general wreck out of the place.

"She screamed then, Doc. I tell you she screamed good. But then she says the thing that makes me come here. 'Oh God,' she says. 'Ghost! Ghost in this house!'

"That floored me, and I knew I was invisible again. I went upstairs and looked in the bathroom

mirror. Sure enough.

Nothing there. So I waited until I faded back and I called your secretary. It took me five tries before she finally wrote my name down, gave me an appointment. It was worse than when I tried to get the meat from the butcher. So I hurried right over. I had to get this out. I swear I'm not going crazy, it's a disease, and it's getting worse and worse and worse.

"So what can I do, Doc? How can I handle this? I know it's not in my head, and I've got to have some advice. Please, Doc. Say something. Tell me what to do. I've never been this desperate in my entire life. I might fade out again and not come back."

The psychiatrist took his hand from his chin where it had been resting. "Wha . . . ? Sorry, I must have dozed. What was it again, Mr. . . . uh?"

Mergusson dove across the desk, clawing for the psychiatrist's throat.

Later when the law came and found the psychiatrist strangled and slumped across his desk, his secretary said "Funny, I don't remember anyone coming in or leaving. Couldn't have come in while I was here. He had an appointment with a Mr. . . . uh." She looked at the appointment book. "A Mr. Mergusson. But he never showed." 17



# THE FANTASY

by Thomas M. Disch,  
Karl Edward Wagner, and R. S. Hadji

THREE UNUSUALLY ERUDITE SCHOLARS  
(WITH UNUSUALLY STRONG OPINIONS)  
LIST THEIR FAVORITE—AND LEAST  
FAVORITE—READING.

Everybody loves a list, right? Wrong. The following people do not like lists: 1) Dalton Trumbo, 2) George Sand, 3) Adrian Messenger . . . and probably one or two more. Everyone else, though, loves a list, so with this fact in mind—and in honor of May 13, the only Friday the 13th in 1983—we asked our three best-read friends to put together 13-item reading lists for us. After combing their libraries and searching their memories, they came up with these wonderfully idiosyncratic recommendations, which should send the more ambitious among you to your local libraries and second-hand bookshops.

## 13 SUPREME MASTERS OF WEIRD FICTION

Selected by R.S. Hadji

1. **Algernon Blackwood (1869-1951)**  
Blackwood was a mystic, deeply versed in occult lore and Oriental religion, which lends to his work the quiet conviction of a true believer. His pantheistic beliefs convey a distinct sense of the supernatural as an extension, rather than an invasion, of the natural order. He is unrivaled in depicting *genii loci*, whether good or evil.
2. **Ray Bradbury (b. 1920)**  
Although considered a science fiction writer by many, Bradbury's weird tales have had an enormous influence on the genre in the last four decades. He chronicles the night-side of the American Dream, *Our Town* distorted in a fun-house mirror. A poet in prose, Bradbury has uniquely captured the terror and wonder of childhood.

3. **Walter De La Mare (1873-1956)**  
The master of the psychological ghost story, De La Mare's stories consist of shifting ambiguities expressed in exquisite prose, glimpses of what might be the supernatural, and then again, might only be a faulty perception, a delusion. His genius lies in the palpably menacing atmosphere that rises from these subtly calculated ambiguities, deceiving the reader as effectively as the characters. The ghosts may not be real, but the unease is there, all the same.
4. **Hanns Heinz Ewers (1871-1943)**  
Perhaps the first modern horror writer, Ewers set out to explore the physical nexus of sex and horror. His works are decadent in mode, yet expressionist in mood; his obsession with blood-lust and the ritual element in mass violence anticipates the terrors of our time.
5. **E.T.A. Hoffmann (1776-1822)**  
Hoffmann was the first true master of weird fiction,

transmuting the dross of the Gothic and *Schaur romantik* into brilliant fables, moving a memorable gallery of grotesques briskly through increasingly fantastic situations. His tales possess subtlety, wit, psychological insight and consummate literary skill, setting the standard for his successors.

6. **M.R. James (1862-1936)**  
James is the quintessential English ghost story writer, dry, understated, perhaps a trifle mechanical, yet lurking behind the bare bones of his diffident scholars and their antiquities is a living heart of pure nightmare. His ghosts haunt the memory long after the dust of the past settles comfortably back into place.
7. **Franz Kafka (1883-1924)**  
Kafka was a quiet revolutionary, overthrowing the ordinary world by distortion, so that the unreal becomes commonplace, and madness the norm. Rarely has so overpowering a sense of alienation and despair been presented with

# FIVE-FOOT BOOKSHELF

such economy; his work has the terrifying lucidity of a nightmare in daylight.

8. **J. Sheridan LeFanu (1814-1873)**  
The greatest Victorian ghost story writer, LeFanu rejected the accepted notion that the spiritual world mirrored the moral order of our own, being convinced that the supernatural was essentially chaotic and malefic, the antithesis of life. In traditional Gothic settings, his characters are hounded to death, innocent and guilty alike, by implacable revenants whose descendants long outlived their gentler contemporaries.

9. **H.P. Lovecraft (1890-1937)**  
A true original, Lovecraft looked beyond the earthly ken of supernatural terrors to envision a universe of "cosmic horror," populated by a pantheon of monstrous deities inimical to humanity. Despite his tortuous prose, the *Cthulhu Mythos* weaves a powerful spell of paranoia, alienation, and fear of the limitless void.

10. **Arthur Machen (1863-1947)**  
Drawing upon a wide knowledge of Hermetic magic and Celtic folklore, Machen's gruesome symbolist fables opened a Pandora's Box of ancient evils lurking beneath the streets, the soil, even the skin of Victorian England. He was a master of evocative settings, whether city or country, at once intensely real yet subtly disturbing. Behind the facade of life, a greater, more terrible reality always lay hidden.

11. **Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849)**  
The first American genius of the macabre, Poe used the mechanics of Gothic fiction as a metaphor for the abnormal psyche. Himself of a naturally morbid temperament, he pursued and was pursued by demons of the mind, yet, reaching to the limits of the imagination, managed to embrace both sublime beauty and loathsome horror in his work. Poe's influence on the genre has been incalculable and definitive.

12. **Jean Ray (1887-1964)**  
Ray was a Belgian journalist, virtually unknown in the English-speaking world, but he produced an enormous body of work, covering every aspect of the supernatural genre. He rarely left Ghent save in imagination, but in that medium roamed a chaotic universe of extraordinary happenings, inhabited by ghosts, goblins and grotesques of every description. His work followed no consistent ethos of the supernatural, but seemed to be guided by a sort of internal dream logic, reminiscent of the Surrealists.

13. **Claude Seignolle (b. 1917)**  
A master of naturalism in the supernatural tale, Seignolle draws upon an intimate knowledge of the French countryside, its inhabitants and their folklore. In his work, the supernatural is a living force of nature, releasing sexual and physical violence in its wake. It is as much a part of the landscape as the soil or the trees, and is accepted as such.

## 13 ALL-TIME CLASSICS OF FANTASY

Selected by Thomas M. Disch

1. **Caleb Williams, or Things as They Are** by William Godwin (1794)  
A good man hounded to . . . his grave? I won't tell. The first epic of paranoia.
2. **The Monk** by Matthew Gregory "Monk" Lewis (1796)  
The first X-rated gothic romance—and still juicy after all these years.
3. **Undine** by Baron de la Motte Fouque (1818; Gosse Translation 1896)  
This fairy tale-novel from the heyday of German romanticism tells in a gentle, sentimental manner of the love of the water-sprite Undine for the young knight Huldbrand. Wagner was rereading this on his deathbed.
4. **Melmoth The Wanderer** by Charles Maturin (1820)  
The quintessential Gothic novel; a virtual mince pie of horrors, including a splendid tour of the dungeons of the Inquisition.
5. **Confessions of a Justified Sinner** by James Hogg (1824)  
Gide waxed enthusiastic for Hogg's portrait of the devil in modern dress; it's also the last word on doppelgangers. The sinner of the title is an awesomely sanctimonious hypocrite.
6. **The Yellow Wallpaper** by Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1892)  
At the turn of the century madness displaced the supernatural as the crux of Gothic horror, and this tale of incipient schizophrenia is a monument of that transition—and an important document of modern feminism.
7. **The Turn of the Screw** by Henry James (1898)  
Still the sneakiest and most sinister of ghost stories. Are Miles and Flora being corrupted by Peter Quint's ghost—or is the governess imagining things?
8. **The Beckoning Fair One** by Oliver Onions (1911)  
Paul Oleron rents a floor of a house on a London square, unaware that he's moved into the very St. Paul's Cathedral of haunted houses.
9. **Lady Into Fox** by David Garnett (1922)  
The title tells the story, but for the sheer word-by-word wonder of its art, nothing can touch Garnett's masterpiece.
10. **The Werewolf of Paris** by Guy Endore (1933)  
Frankenstein and Dracula were of English and Irish origin, respectively, but it was an American, Guy Endore, who wrote the definitive novel on lycanthropy—one that no filmmaker has yet dared adapt.
11. **Conjure Wife** by Fritz Leiber (1943)  
Leiber wrote this classic account of witchcraft in academia forty

# THE FANTASY FIVE-FOOT BOOKSHELF

years ago, and the magic still works: his and its. Happy Anniversary!

12. **The Sound of His Horn**  
by Sarban (pseudonym of John W. Wall) (1952)  
The Nazis won World War II, and now they're breeding lesser races as game to be hunted on their estates. Several degrees more chilling than "The Most Dangerous Game."
13. **Snow White**  
by Donald Barthelme (1964)  
Postmodernism in collision with Walt Disney and the Brothers Grimm. Much fun, many games.

## 13 BEST SUPERNATURAL HORROR NOVELS

Selected by Karl Edward Wagner

1. **Hell! Said the Duchess**  
by Michael Arlen  
An unexpectedly chilling tale of demonic possession from this charming author.
2. **The Burning Court**  
by John Dickson Carr  
Carr liked to introduce elements of the supernatural into his detective novels, usually with terrifying effect. Made into a film, but I haven't seen it.
3. **Alraune** by Hanns Heinz Ewers  
The second of the Frank Braun trilogy, this one concerning the creation of a soulless woman whose birth parallels the legend of the mandrake.
4. **Dark Sanctuary**  
by H.B. Gregory  
This begins routinely enough—an occult investigator is called in to slay an ancestral ghost in a gloomy castle—then takes off to become a 1930s version of Blish's *Black Easter*. Perhaps the best of the British thrillers.
5. **Falling Angel**  
by William Hjortsberg  
This Chanderlesque private eye novel may well be the finest American horror novel of this century.
6. **Maker of Shadows**  
by Jack Mann  
The best of Mann's "Gees" series, most of which are very good indeed. Gees was a private investigator whose cases often involved the supernatural—in this case, pre-Druidic magic and an immortal sorcerer.
7. **The Yellow Mistletoe**  
by Walter S. Masterman  
A wild one. Masterman was another of those detective writers who at times broke away from formula. This one reads like a cross between Monk Lewis and Sax Rohmer.
8. **Melmoth the Wanderer**  
by Charles Robert Maturin  
The greatest of the Gothic novels, proving that gothic and psychological horrors are doubly effective when combined.
9. **Burn Witch Burn** by A. Merritt  
Best known for his lost-race fantasy novels, this time Merritt is equally brilliant at modern horror, in a tale of murderous dolls animated by the souls of their human counterparts. Filmed as *The Devil-Doll*.
10. **Fingers of Fear**  
by J.U. Nicolson  
This one has it all: lycanthropy, vampirism, family curse, patricide, incest, infanticide, hauntings, the works. Supposedly it was marketed as straight detective fiction. Must have freaked out the Agatha Christie fans.
11. **Doctors Wear Scarlet**  
by Simon Raven  
Is it vampirism or is it neurotic obsession? Ask the dead. Superb modern vampire novel was filmed as *Incense for the Damned* (a/k/a *Bloodsuckers*).
12. **Echo of a Curse** by R.R. Ryan  
Undeservedly forgotten. Ms. Ryan was the best of the British thriller writers—a group who wrote popular fiction for the lending libraries, roughly parallel to the pulp writers in America between the world wars. This novel of

lycanthropy and vampirism rates with *Fingers of Fear* as one of the best.

13. **Medusa** by E.H. Visiak  
If David Lindsay had written *Treasure Island* in the throes of a peyote-induced religious experience ... Well, if Coleridge had given Melville a hand on *Moby Dick* after a few pipes of opium ...

## 13 BEST NON-SUPERNATURAL HORROR NOVELS

Selected by Karl Edward Wagner

1. **The Deadly Percheron**  
by John Franklin Bardin  
The opening chapter defies description. Imagine one of those 1930s screwball comedies with the crazy situations, but substitute malevolence for humor.
2. **Psycho** by Robert Bloch  
Can you ever feel safe in the shower again? I think there may have been a film version by Alfred Hitchcock.
3. **Here Comes a Candle**  
by Fredric Brown  
Brown, like Bloch, could be extremely funny when he chose, or extremely frightening. This time he wasn't kidding.
4. **The Screaming Mimi**  
by Fredric Brown  
Brown again at his terrifying best, and again with a psychotic killer. This was filmed twice: once as *The Screaming Mimi* and more recently as *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* (a/k/a *The Phantom of Terror*).
5. **The Fire-Spirits** by Paul Busson  
A strange tale of a young man's involvement with a bewitching peasant child, mountain legends, and German unification. The English translation is said to be heavily expurgated, but I haven't read the German to compare.
6. **The Crooked Hinge**  
by John Dickson Carr  
Sometimes Carr actually did use the supernatural in his detective novels, sometimes he only seemed



to do so. *The Crooked Hinge* does not turn out to be a ghost story, but that won't spare your nerves.

7. **The Sorcerer's Apprentice** by Hanns Heinz Ewers  
The first of the Frank Braun trilogy. Braun hypnotizes a peasant girl into believing she has known a heavenly visitation, the isolated village goes mad with religious frenzy, and Braun is in over his head.
8. **Vampire** by Hanns Heinz Ewers  
Third and most obviously political of the Frank Braun trilogy. Braun tours the United States before its entry into World War I, trying to gain support for the German cause, during which time he suffers from periods of weakness and blackouts. The question of who is the victim and who the master was a recurrent dilemma in Ewers's work, and one which the Nazis finally solved for him.
9. **Fully Dressed and in His Right Mind** by Michael Fessier  
Like John Franklin Bardin, Fessier takes a screwball situation and adroitly twists it into something evil.
10. **The Shadow on the House** by Mark Hansom  
Hansom is another of the unjustly neglected group of British thriller writers. Usually his novels only appeared to have supernatural content, and at the end we learn it was only Uncle Geoffrey in a Mad Monk costume behind it all. The ending to this one is a stunner.
11. **Torture Garden** by Octave Mirbeau  
*Fin-de-siecle* decadence at its best. At one time one of those "suppressed" books and now chiefly remembered for one of Frank Frazetta's rarer paperback covers.
12. **The Master of the Day of Judgment** by Leo Perutz  
Is it real or is it hashish? But what is reality? It's all relative, isn't it? This one is strange, even for Perutz.

13. **The Subjugated Beast** by R.R. Ryan  
Ryan could be extremely sadistic when the mood was on her, and the mood was usually on her, and it certainly was here. Ryan could combine psychological cruelty with Grand Guignol horror better than any writer going, except perhaps Charles Birkin, and she had a knack for putting her characters into situations that would have given Hitchcock qualms. This would have made a great Hitchcock film, although the British probably had laws against such things.

### 13 WORST STINKERS OF THE WEIRD

Selected by R.S. Hadji

1. **The Sorrows of Satan** by Marie Corelli  
The worst sort of Victorian tripe, sentimental, vulgar and monumentally boring. Her contemporary critics evidently felt much the same way.
2. **Unholy Relics** by M.P. Dare  
Dreadful ghost stories, in the M.R. James tradition, poorly written and ripe with embarrassing imagery Freudians would have a field day with.
3. **Count Dracula's Canadian Affair** by Otto Fredrick  
Dracula vs. the Mounties during the North-West Rebellion of 1885. Need I say more?
4. **The Grip of Fear** by Vern Hansen  
Evidently a shaky one, this being the second most inept collection of weird tales I've ever read. The "author" is blissfully innocent of such niceties as imagination, style, or grammar.
5. **Rest in Agony** by Ivar Jorgenson  
A pulpy-to-rotten diabolic thriller, much worse than any of *The Exorcist's* misbegotten progeny.
6. **Dracutwig** by Mallory T. Knight  
Vampire dollybird takes on sixties "Swinging London." I burned my copy some years back, and have not been troubled since.
7. **The Transition of Titus Crow** by Brian Lumley  
"Doe not calle up Any wordes that you cannot put downe in readable prose, lest Yogue-Sothoth drye yr ink in the pen, and eate yr face." —Claus Vomitius.
8. **The Vampire Tapes** by Arabella Randolphe  
Howlingly bad imitation of *Interview with the Vampire*.
9. **Suffer the Children** by John Saul  
A vile book, just shy of "kiddie porn." The real horror is that this was a bestseller!
10. **Cellars** by John Shirley  
The most thoroughly disgusting horror thriller in recent memory, a declaration of war on all standards of taste in the genre.
11. **The Sucking Pit** by Guy N. Smith  
The title says it all.
12. **The Lair of the White Worm** by Bram Stoker  
A thoroughly demented book, at times unintentionally hilarious. The author evidently was half-mad when he wrote this, the absolute proof of same.
13. **The Vampire Baroness** by Violet Van Der Elst  
Now this is the *most* inept collection I've ever read, a legendary British stinker. She also wrote poetry and songs—believe me, you don't want to know. **17**

*The Fantasy Five-Foot Bookshelf* concludes in our next issue with lists of neglected masterpieces, science fiction horror novels, best works of fantasy since 1970, and the scariest short stories of all time.



# TV's Twilight Zone: Part Twenty-Four



CONTINUING MARC SCOTT ZICREE'S  
SHOW-BY-SHOW GUIDE TO THE ENTIRE  
TWILIGHT ZONE TELEVISION SERIES,  
COMPLETE WITH ROD SERLING'S OPENING  
AND CLOSING NARRATIONS

*"You unlock this door with the key of imagination. Beyond it is another dimension—a dimension of sound, a dimension of sight, a dimension of mind. You're moving into a land of both shadow and substance, of things and ideas. You've just crossed over into the Twilight Zone."*

## 144. WHAT'S IN THE BOX

Written by Martin M. Goldsmith  
Producer: William Froug  
Director: Richard L. Bare  
Dir. of Photography: George T. Clemens  
Music: Stock  
Cast  
Joe Britt: William Demarest  
Phyllis Britt: Joan Blondell  
TV Repairman: Sterling Holloway  
Dr. Saltman: Herbert Lytton  
Woman: Sandra Gould  
Judge: Howard Wright  
Russian Duke: John L. Sullivan  
Panther Man: Ted Christy  
Car Salesman: Ron Stokes  
Prosecutor: Douglas Bank  
Announcer: Tony Miller

*"Portrait of a tv fan. Name: Joe Britt. Occupation: cab driver. Tonight, Mr. Britt is going to watch 'a really big show,' something special for the cabbie who's seen everything. Joe Britt doesn't know it, but his flag is down and his meter's running and*

*he's in high gear—on his way to the Twilight Zone."*

After loudmouth Britt insults a tv repairman working on his set, the man abruptly closes up the television and says that it's fixed—for free. Britt thinks nothing of this until he sees that the set is able to pick up channel 10—something it's never done before—and that the screen shows Joe in the company of his mistress! Joe is desperate that his shrewish wife Phyllis not see this. Things rapidly get worse, however; the tv now shows a scene in which Joe argues with Phyllis and punches her through their apartment window to her death—a scene which only Joe seems able to see and hear. Frantic to avoid this tragedy, Joe admits his past adultery and begs Phyllis to forgive him. This only serves to infuriate her; the two argue and Joe, enraged, punches Phyllis through the window. As the police lead him away the repairman appears. "Fix your set.



okay, mister?" he asks Joe. "You will recommend my service, won't you?"

*"The next time your tv set is on the blink, when you're in the need for a first-rate repairman, may we suggest our own specialist? Factory-trained, prompt, honest, twenty-four-hour service. You won't find him in the phone book, but his office is conveniently located—in the Twilight Zone."*

#### 146. I AM THE NIGHT—COLOR ME BLACK

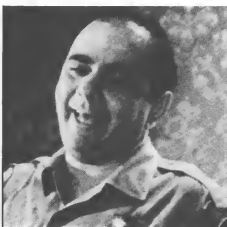
Written by Rod Serling  
 Producer: William Froug  
 Director: Abner Biberman  
 Dir. of Photography: George T. Clemens  
 Music: Stock

**Cast**  
 Sheriff Koch: Michael Constantine  
 Colbey: Paul Fix  
 Jagger: Terry Becker  
 Deputy Pierce: George Lindsey  
 Rev. Anderson: Ivan Dixon  
 Ella Koch: Eve McVeagh  
 Man #1: Douglas Bank  
 Man #2: Ward Wood  
 Woman: Elizabeth Harrower

*"Sheriff Charlie Koch on the morning of an execution. As a matter of fact, it's seven-thirty in the morning. Logic and natural laws dictate that at this hour there should be daylight. It is a simple rule of physical science that the sun should rise at a certain moment and supercede the darkness. But at this given moment, Sheriff*

*Charlie Koch, a deputy named Pierce, a condemned man named Jagger and a small, inconsequential village will shortly find out that there are causes and effects that have no precedent. Such is usually the case—in the Twilight Zone."*

On the day Jagger is to be executed, a number of people wonder why it's still pitch-black throughout the Midwestern town. Jagger is an unpopular idealist whose trial—for killing a "cross-burning, psychopathic bully"—had a number of questionable elements: Deputy Pierce perjured himself on the stand; Sheriff Koch failed to bring up facts that might have led to acquittal; and Colbey, editor of the town paper, printed only articles naming Jagger guilty, although he personally believed him innocent. On the gallows, Rev. Anderson asks Jagger if he enjoyed the killing—Jagger did indeed. Anderson pronounces him guilty to the blood-thirsty crowd, and Jagger is hanged. The darkness closes in, a



darkness created by hate . . . and it's spreading to other parts of the world.

*"A sickness known as hate; not a virus, not a microbe, not a germ—but a sickness nonetheless, highly contagious, deadly in its effects. Don't look for it in the Twilight Zone—look for it in a mirror. Look for it before the light goes out altogether."*

#### 145. THE MASKS

Written by Rod Serling  
 Producer: Bert Granet  
 Director: Ida Lupino  
 Dir. of Photography: George T. Clemens  
 Music: Stock

**Cast**  
 Jason Foster: Robert Keith  
 Emily Harper: Virginia Gregg  
 Wilfred Harper: Milton Selzer  
 Wilfred, Jr.: Alan Sues  
 Paula Harper: Brooke Hayward  
 Doctor: Willis Bouchee  
 Butler: Bill Walker

*"Mr. Jason Foster, a tired ancient who on this particular Mardi Gras evening will leave the earth. But before departing he has some things to do, some services to perform, some debts to pay—and some justice to mete out. This is New Orleans, Mardi Gras time. It is also the Twilight Zone."*

Knowing he is about to die, Foster summons his heirs—with whom he shares no affection—to his mansion for a bizarre Mardi Gras ritual. A Cajun has fashioned grotesque masks for him that reflect the true inner natures of his family; the whiny self-pity of his daughter Emily; the



avarice of his son-in-law Wilfred; the vanity of his granddaughter Paula; and the dull cruelty of his grandson Wilfred, Jr. Foster demands that they wear the masks until midnight; as for him, he will wear a death's-head. They refuse—until he informs them that they'll be disinherited unless they comply. Their greed overcomes their disgust; they all don the masks. As the hours slowly tick by, Foster's mind beg to be allowed to discard the masks, but Foster is steadfast in his determination. As midnight tolls, Foster dies. Overjoyed to be rid of him and to have gained his wealth,

his family throw off the masks—and are horrified to see that their faces have taken on the hideous physical characteristics of the masks.

*"Mardi Gras incident, the dramatic personae being four people who came to celebrate, and in a sense, let themselves go. This they did with a vengeance. They now wear the faces of all that was inside them—and they'll wear them for the rest of their lives, said lives now to be spent in shadow. Tonight's tale of men, the macabre, and masks—on the Twilight Zone."*



# The Lonely

by Rod Serling

THE ORIGINAL  
TELEVISION SCRIPT  
FIRST AIRED ON CBS-TV  
NOVEMBER 13, 1959

## CAST

James A. Corry..... Jack Warden  
Alicia..... Jean Marsh  
Capt. Allenby..... John Dehner  
Adams..... Ted Knight  
Carstairs..... James Turley

## 1 EXT. SKY NIGHT

Shot of the sky... the various nebulae and planet bodies stand out in sharp, sparkling relief. As the CAMERA begins a SLOW PAN across the heavens—

## NARRATOR'S VOICE

There is a fifth dimension beyond that which is known to man. It is a dimension as vast as space and timeless as infinity. It is the middle ground between light and shadow, between science and superstition, and it lies between the pit of man's fears and the summit of his knowledge. This is the dimension of imagination. It is an area which we call the Twilight Zone.

The CAMERA has begun to PAN DOWN until it passes the horizon and is flush on the OPENING SHOT.

We are now looking at an empty patch of desert, an arid, dull, nondescript piece of land, its monotony broken only by an occasional scrubby, dying cactus, and a few sand dunes that shift nervously and sporadically in a wind that provides the only motion and the only sound to an otherwise stagnant scene. The CAMERA PANS LEFT very slowly until it is on a—

## 2. LONG SHOT A COTTAGE

That sits alone in the desert. This is a ramshackle, two-room affair made of corrugated steel, driftwood, and other nondescript material. Alongside is a beat-up vintage 1930's sedan. Beyond and behind this is a tiny tool shed that houses a small generator. A limp wire extends from the shed to the shack.

## NARRATOR'S VOICE (over the pan)

Witness, if you will, a dungeon, made out of mountains, salt flats, and sand that stretch to infinity. The dungeon has an inmate: James A. Corry. And this is his residence, a metal shack. An old touring car that squats in the sun and goes nowhere—for there is nowhere to go.

At this point we see Corry come out of the house. He's dressed in jeans and a threadbare shirt. He looks up toward the pale sky and the strange, sick, white gleam of the sun, shades his eyes, walks over toward the car and stops, looks at it, touches it with his hand, then leans against it and stares once again toward the horizon.

## 3. MED. CLOSE SHOT

Across the car looking at Corry.

He's a man in his early-forties of medium height, perhaps a little more muscular than most men. His face was once a strong face, it is no longer. There is no will left and no resolve. What we see on it now is resignation; a sense of dull, pervading hopelessness. He rather aimlessly opens the car door and, leaving it open, slides in to sit in the driver's seat and look out the front windshield. The CAMERA MOVES AROUND so that it's shooting through the front windshield toward him

#### 4. CLOSE SHOT CORRY

As he gets out of the car and stares across toward the horizon.

#### NARRATOR'S VOICE

For the record, let it be known that James A. Corry is a convicted criminal placed in solitary confinement. Confinement in this case stretches as far as the eye can see, because this particular dungeon is on an asteroid nine million miles from the Earth.

The CAMERA PANS slowly up toward the sky to where we see a shot of the earth.

#### NARRATOR'S VOICE

Now witness, if you will, a man's mind and body shriveling in the sun, a man dying of loneliness.

#### 5. MED. SHOT CORRY

Corry, shoulders slumped, walking in a kind of draggy, aimless shuffle, goes back toward the shack and walks inside.

CUT TO

#### 6. INT. SHACK FULL SHOT THE ROOM

The inside, like the exterior, is makeshift and looks temporary. The furniture is made out of packing cases. There's an aged wind-up Victrola, an icebox. The bed is disheveled and dirty. He walks over to a small, rickety table, takes out a dog-eared ledger, opens it and rifles through the pages slowly and rather aimlessly. Then he takes a pencil, sits down, and starts to write. The CAMERA MOVES IN very slowly as he voices aloud that which he is writing.

#### CORRY'S VOICE

Entry, fifteenth day, sixth month ... the year four. And

all the days and the months and the years the same. (a pause. Now he sits as he writes)

There'll be a supply ship coming in soon, I think. They're either due or overdue, and I hope it's Allenby's ship because he's a decent man and he brings things for me. (he stops writing for a moment looks down at the ledger, then continues to write)

Like he brought in the parts to that antique automobile. I was a year putting that thing together—such as it is. A whole year putting an old car together.

(a pause)

But thank God for that car and for the hours it used up and the days and the weeks. I can look at it out there and I know it's real, and reality is what I need. Because what is there left that I can believe in? The desert and the wind? The silence? Or myself—can I believe in myself anymore? (another pause)

Disjointed thought ... a little crazy ... but maybe I'll become like that car. Inanimate. Just an item sitting in the sand—and then would I feel loneliness? Would I feel misery? I wonder ...

He slowly lets the pencil drop out of his fingers, looks down at the book. His eyes close, then he slumps forward, burying his face in his arms, leaning against the table.

DISSOLVE TO

#### 7. EXT. SHACK DAY

Through the window we can see Corry sleeping, still by the table. There's the distant roaring sound of engines, a flash of light that shines against the side of the shack and enters the window. We see Corry start, and rise and race to the door, flinging it open, peering out over the landscape.

CUT TO

#### 8. EXT. DESERT LONG SHOT A GROUP OF THREE MEN

Dressed in simple uniforms not unlike pilots of today. The CAMERA STAYS directly on them as they approach. Into the frame from behind the camera comes Corry, who is racing out to meet them. His fingers clench and

unclench at his side. He takes a few fast, stumbling steps toward them, then thinking better of it stops and then, giving in again, runs toward them again.

#### 9. CLOSE SHOT

As they suddenly meet a few feet from one another. The head of the space group stops. This is Allenby, a man in his fifties. He nods a little curtly.

#### ALLENBY

How are you, Corry?

#### CORRY

All right

There's a silence now. Adams, one of the other two spacemen, looks around.

#### ADAMS

Quite a place you got here, Corry.

#### CORRY

I'm so glad you like it

#### ADAMS

I didn't say I liked it. I think it stinks

#### CORRY

You don't have to live here now, do you?

#### ADAMS

No, but I've got to come back here four times a year. And that's eight months out of twelve, Corry, away from earth. Sometimes my kids don't even recognize me when I come home.

#### CORRY

(very simply)  
I'm sorry.

#### ADAMS

(with a look)  
I'll bet you are! But you've got it made, don't you, Corry?  
Makes for simple living, doesn't it?

(he bends down and picks up a handful of sand)

This is Corry's kingdom.

(he lets the sand run through his fingers)

Right here. Six thousand miles north to south. Four thousand miles east to west—and all of it's just like this!

The CAMERA is on Corry's face now. He wets his lips. He wants to say something with desperate urgency. Allenby sees the look, looks away a little uncomfortably for a moment.

# The Lonely

ALLENBY

We've only got a fifteen-minute layover, Corry.

Corry wets his lips and tries to keep the supplication out of his voice.

CORRY

Nobody's checking your schedule out here. Why don't we have a game of cards or something?

ALLENBY

(shakes his head)

I'm sorry, Corry. This isn't an arbitrary decision. If we delay out time of departure any more than fifteen minutes, that places us in a different orbital position. We'd never make it back to earth. We'd have to stay here at least fourteen days before this place was in position again.

CORRY

So, fourteen days? Why not have us a ball? I've got some beer I've saved. We could play some cards, tell me what's going on back there—

ALLENBY

(with an embarrassed look at the others)

I wish we could, Corry, but like I said—we've only got fifteen minutes ...

CORRY

(his voice rising and getting shaky as if losing control)

Well ... well, what's a few lousy days to you? Couple of card games.

(he nods toward the others)

How about you guys? You think I'll murder you or something over a bad hand?

ALLENBY

(quietly and firmly)

I'm sorry, Corry.

(he starts to take Corry's arm)

Let's go to the shack—

Corry flings off his arm, not in anger, but in desperation.

CORRY

All right. Two minutes are gone now. You've got thirteen minutes left. I wouldn't want to foul up your schedule, Allenby. Not for a ...

(he looks away)

Not for a lousy game of cards. Not for a few bottles of crummy beer.

Then he looks up slowly, turns to

lock eyes with Allenby. He seems to catch his breath for a moment.

CORRY

Allenby ... what about the pardon?

ADAMS

(squinting up toward the sky, his voice very matter of fact)

You're out of luck, Corry. Sentence reads fifty years and they're not even reviewing cases of homicide. You've been here four now. That makes forty-six to go, so get comfortable, dad, huh?

He laughs until his eyes reach Allenby's. Allenby stares at him, then wets his lips and looks away. Adams's laugh dies out.

## 10. TRACK SHOT

As the three men head toward the shack, Corry's eyes are down, staring at the sand where his feet make crunchy sounds as they sink down over the crust of the top layer. Allenby, alongside of him as they walk, looks at him intermittently.

## 11. DIFFERENT ANGLE

As they reach a small knoll. Over their shoulder we see the shack and car sitting here in mute, ugly loneliness. Corry stops instinctively to stare at them. Allenby touches his arm compassionately with an instinctive gentleness.

ALLENBY

(quietly)

I'm sorry, Corry. Unfortunately, we don't make the rules. All we do is deliver your supplies and pass on information. I told you last time there's been a lot of pressure back home about this kind of punishment. There are a whole lot of people who think it is unnecessarily cruel. Well, who knows what the next couple of years will bring? They may change their minds, alter the law, imprison you on earth like the old days.

CORRY

(turns to stare intently into the older man's face)

Allenby, I have to tell you something. Every morning ... every morning when I get up I tell myself that this is my last day of sanity. I won't be able to live another day of

loneliness. Not another day, and by noon when I can't keep my fingers still and the inside of my mouth feels like gun powder and burnt copper and deep inside my gut I've got an ache that won't go away and seems to be crawling all over the inside of my body, prickling at me, tearing little chunks out of me—and then I think I've got to hold out for another day, just another day.

(then he turns to stare down at the shack)

But I can't keep doing that day after day for the next forty-six years. I'll lose my mind, Allenby.

ADAMS

You're breakin' my heart—

Corry whirls around to stare at him. His features contort. There's an animal-like growl that shouts out deep from his throat and suddenly, losing all control, he lunges at Adams, hitting him twice, crunching, desperate blows that smash against Adams's face and propel him backwards to sprawl face-first in the sand. Allenby and the other officer grab Corry's arms.

ALLENBY

(shouting)

Easy, Corry, easy!

Gradually Corry lets his body relax, going the route from a trembling, shaking ague to a heavy, tired motionlessness.

## 12. MED. CLOSE SHOT ADAMS

As he rises from the sand, gingerly touches the bruise on his face.

ADAMS

I wouldn't worry about going off my rocker, Corry. It's already happened. Stir crazy, they used to call it. Well, that's what you are now. Stir crazy.

ALLENBY

(taking a step toward him to keep him back)

Back off, Adams. You and Carstairs go back and get the supplies. Bring them over to the shack.

ADAMS

(bridling)

Mr. Corry has a broken leg or something?

He points to Corry.

ALLENBY

Go ahead, do as I tell you.  
And the big crate with the red  
tag—handle that one gently.

CARSTAIRS

How about the use of his  
buggy there? Some of the  
stuff's heavy.

CORRY

(as if shaken out of a dream,  
softly)

It isn't running today

ADAMS

(laughs)

It isn't running today! What's  
the matter, Corry—use it too  
much, do you?

(to Carstairs)

You know, there's so many  
places a guy can go out here.  
There's the country club over  
the mound there and the  
seashore over that way, and  
the drive-in theater, that's  
someplace around here, isn't it,  
Corry?

ALLENBY

Knock it off, Adams, and go  
get the stuff.

Adams and Carstairs turn with  
another look toward Corry and  
start back across the desert.

Allenby takes Corry's arm and  
the two men walk toward the  
shack.

### 13. LONG SHOT

#### CORRY AND ALLENBY

As they walk past the car and  
the shed and into the shack.

### 14. INT. SHACK FULL SHOT THE ROOM

Corry goes over to sit on the bed  
to stare numbly across the room  
at nothing. Allenby crosses over  
to the icebox, takes out a jug of  
water, looks around the room  
and then over to Corry.

ALLENBY

Glasses?

CORRY

(motions)

Paper cups. On the shelf there.

Allenby unscrews the jar and  
sniffs, makes a face, then pours  
some water into a cup, takes it  
in a quick gulp.

ALLENBY

We've got some fresh on  
board. They'll be bringing it  
over.

Corry nods numbly. Allenby pulls  
up a chair so that he's sitting

directly opposite Corry.

Brought you some magazines,  
too. Strictly on my own.

CORRY

(nods)

Thanks.

ALLENBY

And some old vintage movies.  
Science-fiction stuff. You'll get a  
kick out of it.

CORRY

(nods, looks up unsmiling)

I'm sure I will.

Allenby bites his lip and looks at  
Corry for a long, silent moment,  
then he rises and crosses to the  
window.

ALLENBY

I brought you something else.  
Corry. It would mean my job  
if they suspected.

(then he turns toward Corry)

It would be my neck if they  
found out for sure.

CORRY

Look, Allenby, I don't want  
gifts now. I don't want tidbits. It  
makes me feel like an animal  
in a cage and there's a nice  
old lady out there who wants  
to throw peanuts at me.  
(he suddenly lashes out and  
grabs Allenby)

A pardon, Allenby, that's the  
only gift I want. I'm not a  
murderer. I killed in self-  
defense. A lot of people  
believe me and it happens to  
be the truth. I killed in self-  
defense—

ALLENBY

(gently takes Corry's hands off of  
him)

I know Corry. I know all about  
it.

(he retraces his steps back over  
the chair and sits down)

I doubt if it'll be much  
consolation to you, but it's not  
easy handling this kind of  
assignment. Stopping here four  
times a year and having to  
look at a man's agony.

CORRY

You're quite right. That's  
precious little consolation.

There's a long, long silence.  
Allenby rises.

ALLENBY

Well, I can't bring you  
freedom, Corry. All I can do ...  
all I can do is to try to bring  
you things to help keep your  
sanity.

(a pause)

Something ... anything so you  
can fight loneliness.

He looks across the room and  
out the window.

### 15. LONG SHOT THROUGH THE WINDOW

Adams and Carstairs are both  
lugging a small metal cart  
loaded down with crates and  
supplies. They enter the area of  
the shack to bring the cart up  
close to the front door. The two of  
them take a heavy crate off the  
top of the pile, a red tag  
fluttering from one end. They lay  
it down in the sand.

CARSTAIRS

(calls)

You want this big crate  
opened up, Captain?

### 16. MED CLOSE SHOT

#### ALLENBY

ALLENBY

(calls out)





Not yet. Stay out there. I'll be right out.

**17. TWO SHOT CORRY AND ALLENBY**

**CORRY**

I'll bite, Captain. What's the present?

(he looks briefly through the window)

What is it?

He rises, goes over to the window to stare out at the long, rectangular box.

**18. MED. LONG SHOT THROUGH THE WINDOW**

Of the box as it lies in the sand.

**19. MED. CLOSE SHOT CORRY**

As he turns back toward the room.

**CORRY**

If it's a twenty-year supply of puzzles, I'll have to decline with thanks. I don't need any puzzles, Allenby. If I want to try to probe any mysteries—I can look in the mirror and try to figure out my own.

**ALLENBY**

(crosses over to the door, opens it, turns back to Corry)

We've got to go now. We'll be back in three months

(a pause)

Are you listening to me, Corry? This is important.

Corry stares at him.

**ALLENBY**

When you open up the crate there's nothing you need do. The ... item has been vacuum-packed. It needs no activator

of any kind. The air will do that. There'll be a booklet inside, too, that can answer any of your questions.

**CORRY**

You're mysterious as hell.

**ALLENBY**

I don't mean to be. It's just like I told you, though—I'm risking a lot to have brought this here.

(he points to the door)

They don't know what it is. I brought. I'd appreciate your waiting until we get out of sight.

**CORRY**

(unemotionally)

All right. Have a good trip back ... Give my regards to ...

(he wets his lips)

... to Broadway. And every place else while you're at it.

**ALLENBY**

Sure, Corry. I'll see you.

He goes out the door, motions to the other two men. They start to follow him.

CUT TO.

**20. MED. CLOSE SHOT CORRY**

Standing at the door.

**CORRY**

Allenby!

CUT TO.

**21. REVERSE ANGLE ALLENBY AND THE OTHER TWO CORRY'S P.O.V.**

The three men pause to look toward the shack. In the foreground in front of them we see the long crate lying all by itself in the sand.

CUT TO.

**22. MED. CLOSE SHOT CORRY**

He walks down the step and stands near the box, points to it.

**CORRY**

I don't much care what it is. For the thought, Allenby. For the ... for the decency of it ... I thank you.

**23. MED. SHOT ALLENBY**

**ALLENBY**

You're quite welcome, Corry.

He turns and the other two follow him.

**24. LONG ANGLE SHOT**

Looking down at them as they slowly tramp across the sand and disappear over the line of dunes.

**25. MED. CLOSE SHOT CORRY**

He watches them go, shading his eyes again at the sun, then very slowly he looks down at the box. He stares at it for a long moment, then he kneels down to feel its sides and finally finds the two release catches. His hands go out to touch them simultaneously. He pushes them, and very slowly the top of the box opens.

**26. TIGHT CLOSE ANGLE SHOT**

Looking up as from inside the box toward Corry's face as he stares into it. His eyes suddenly widen with astonishment.

CUT ABRUPTLY TO.

**27. MED. CLOSE SHOT INSERT SECTION OF A SPACE CRAFT**

What we are seeing is just part of a hatch and a metal ladder. Carstairs is just clambering up them to disappear inside this ship. Adams starts to follow him. He pauses halfway up to look toward Allenby, who in turn is staring off into the distance.

**ADAMS**

Captain—just man to man, huh?

**ALLENBY**

What?

**ADAMS**

What did you bring him? What was in the box?

**28. MED. CLOSE SHOT ALLENBY**

As he slowly scratches the beard stubble of his square jaw.

ALLENBY

(very softly as if to no one in particular)

I'm not sure really. Maybe it's just an illusion—or maybe it's salvation.

Then he turns, motions Adams up the ladder, and then follows him up.

DISSOLVE TO

### 29. EXT. THE SHACK

The top of the box has been opened and as the CAMERA PANS over it toward the shack we see that it is empty. The CAMERA continues to PAN over to the shack.

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO

### 30. INT. SHACK

Corry stands at the far end of the room staring off beyond the camera. He has a book in his hand which he suddenly seems to remember. He looks down at it, stares at the cover for a long moment, then opens it with both his hands. He studies it perplexed for a long moment, then he looks up again. Then he looks down at the book again and slowly he reads aloud.

CORRY

You are now the proud owner of a robot built in the form of a woman. To all intent and purpose this creature is a woman. Physiologically and psychologically she is a human being with a set of emotions, a memory track, the ability to reason, to think, and to speak. She is beyond illness, and under normal circumstances should have a life span similar to that of a comparable human being. Her name is Alicia.

Very slowly Corry's head rises. SLOW PAN SHOT ACROSS the room to a shot of Alicia who sits in a chair looking back at him. While she looks human, there is something too immobile, too emotionless about her features. There is a deadness to the eyes when they look back at him, showing neither resignation nor interest and only bare awareness. She's dressed in a simple loose, flowing garment that neither adds to nor detracts from her femininity. Corry takes a few hesitant steps toward her, his eyes wide, a fright working its

way out. His mouth moves but nothing comes.

### 31. CLOSE SHOT THE GIRL

ALICIA

That's my name—Alicia.

What's yours?

### 32. CLOSE SHOT CORRY

He stops dead in his tracks and suddenly he looks horrified, sick with distaste. He shakes his head from side to side and backs away.

CORRY

(in a very low voice)

Get out of here.

(now a shout)

Get out of here! I don't want any machine in here! Go on, get out of here!

With an effort he grabs the girl and propels her out the door and slams it behind her. Then he leans against the door, eyes closed, breathing heavily and gradually his composure comes back. He takes a few steps back toward the center of the room. In the process he looks toward the window.

### 33. LONG SHOT THROUGH THE WINDOW

The girl stands there in the yard staring at him.

A SLOW FADE TO BLACK

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE ON.

### 34. EXT. DESERT CORRY'S SHACK IN FOREGROUND DISSOLVE TO

### 35. INT. SHACK

Corry is in the process of putting up a shelf. He stands on a small aluminum ladder, pounding with hammer and nails. The sweat pours down his face. He tests the shelf, then gets down off the ladder, picks up a towel and wipes his face, suddenly looks down at his feet.

### 36. CLOSE SHOT BUCKET OF WATER

CAMERA PULLS BACK for shot of Alicia standing there.

CORRY

Well?

ALICIA

I brought you some water.

Where shall I put it?

CORRY

Just leave it there and get out

ALICIA

It will get warm just sitting there.

CORRY

(takes a glass, dips it in the water)

You'd know, huh?

He takes a drink.

ALICIA

I can feel thirst.

Corry wipes his mouth with the back of his hand and looks at her intensely.

### 37. CLOSE SHOT CORRY

As he stares at her. The same look of abhorrence as if clinically examining some foreign object.

### 38. CLOSE SHOT THE GIRL

Her eyes go down and she turns away.

### 39. TWO SHOT

CORRY

What else can you feel?

ALICIA

I don't understand—

CORRY

I suppose you can feel heat and cold? How about pain? Can you feel pain?

ALICIA

(nods softly)

That, too.

Corry takes a step over toward her, looking down at her.

CORRY

How? How can you? You're a machine, aren't you?

ALICIA

(whispering)

Yes.

CORRY

Of course you are. So why didn't they build you to look like a machine? Why aren't you made out of metal with nuts and bolts sticking out of you? With wires and electrodes and things like that?

(his face contorts now and his voice rises)

Why do they turn you into a lie? Why do they cover you with what looks like flesh? Why do they give you a face? A face that if I look at long enough makes me think...



# The Lonely

makes me believe that ...

His hands grab her shoulders and go up past her neck to cup her face in a hard, painful grasp. Alicia closes her eyes against the pain.

ALICIA

Corry—

He releases her, strides past her and out the door.

CUT TO

## 40. EXT. THE SHACK

Corry stands halfway to the car, his back to the shack.

CORRY

You mock me, you know that? When you look at me. When you talk to me—I'm being mocked.

ALICIA

I'm sorry.

(then she slowly reaches up, feels of her neck and shoulders)

You hurt me, Corry.

CORRY

(turns to her, walks over very close to her)

Hurt you? How could I hurt you?

(he grabs her again)

This isn't flesh. There aren't any nerves under there. There aren't any tendons or muscles.

He suddenly pushes her bodily away.

CUT TO

## 41. FLASH SHOT

As she sprawls head first into the sand.

## 42. TWO SHOT

Then in the same fury that knows neither logic nor understanding, he searches wildly around and then picks up a shovel. He holds it by the handle and brandishes it up high. He shouts at her.

CORRY

You know what you are?

You're like that broken-down heap I've got sitting in the yard. You're a hunk of metal with arms and legs instead of wheels. But that heap doesn't mock me like you do. It doesn't look at me with make-believe eyes and talk to me with a make-believe voice.

(he takes a step toward her, now the shovel up high)

Well, listen you ... listen

machine, I'm sick at being mocked by a ghost. By a memory of women. And that's all you are. You're a reminder to me that I'm so lonely I'm about to lose my mind.

And now his face is completely contorted, wild-eyed. He raises the shovel and is about to bring it down on her.

## 43. ANGLE SHOT

### LOOKING DOWN AT HER

She looks up at him and then her eyes close and tears appear. Then when she opens her eyes again we look at her as from a new and fresh perspective. The face is no longer inanimate, no longer immobile. It now has depth, emotion. It is filled with the nuances and mysteries of the woman and there is a beauty now that shines out.

## 44. REVERSE ANGLE LOOKING UP AT CORRY

As he reacts. He hesitates and then lets the shovel drop out of his hand onto the sand. Very, very slowly he kneels down to crouch very close to her. His hand reaches out and touches the tears on her face and now his voice is gentle.

CORRY

You can cry too, can't you?

ALICIA

(nods)

With reason. And I can feel loneliness, too.

Corry takes her arm and helps her to her feet, then stands very close to her, looking down at her face.

CORRY

Well go back inside now.

We'll eat our dinner.

ALICIA

All right.

She starts to walk on ahead of him.

CORRY

Alicia.

She turns to look at him.

CORRY

I don't care ... I don't care how you were born ... or made. You're flesh and blood to me. You're a woman. (a pause)

You're my companion, Alicia. I need you desperately.

## 45. CLOSE SHOT ALICIA

She smiles.

ALICIA

And I need you, Corry.

He goes up to walk alongside of her.

## 46. LONG ANGLE SHOT

### LOOKING DOWN ON THEM

As they walk toward the shack.

LAP DISSOLVE TO.

## 47. EXT. SHACK PORCH

### DAY MED. CLOSE

### SHOT CORRY

As he sits in the homemade rocker. He looks off toward the horizon and then slowly begins to write as we hear his voice.

CORRY'S VOICE

Alicia has been with me now for eleven months. Twice when Allenby has brought the ship in with supplies I've hidden her so that the others wouldn't see her and I've seen the question in Allenby's eyes each time. It's a question I have myself. It's difficult to write down what has been the sum total of this very strange and bizarre relationship. It is man and woman, man and machine, and there are times even when I know that Alicia is simply an extension of me. I hear my words coming from her. My emotions. The things that she has learned to love are those things that I've loved.

He stops abruptly as he listens to Alicia singing from inside the shack. He smiles and then continues to write again.

CORRY'S VOICE

But I think I've reached the point now where I shall not analyze Alicia any longer. I shall accept her here simply as a part of my life—an integral part.

He continues to write silently now, turning the page to continue on the other side, and then he stops, puts the book and pencil down, rises, goes to the door and stands there looking at Alicia. She turns to smile at him and he enters the room. The CAMERA MOVES BACK so that it is shooting at them through the open door and across the ledger book which lies face up. We hear Corry's voice.

**CORRY'S VOICE**

Because I'm not lonely any longer. Each day can now be lived with.

(a pause)

I love Alicia. Nothing else matters.

DISSOLVE TO

**48. EXT. DESERT NIGHT  
LONG SHOT LOOKING UP  
TOWARD A MOUND  
OF SAND**

As hand in hand, Alicia and Corry race down toward the camera. He stops her abruptly and points to the sky.

**CORRY**

Alicia, look. That's the star, Betelgeuse. It's in the constellation of Orion. And there's the "Great Bear" with its pointer stars in line with the Northern Star. And there's the constellation Hercules. You see, Alicia?

He traces a path across the sky with his upraised hand and her eyes follow it. Then he turns to look down at her face upturned in the half-light.

**ALICIA**

(softly)

God's beauty.

**CORRY**

(nods)

That's right, Alicia. God's beauty.

Suddenly the girl's eyes stop as they traverse the sky. She points.

**ALICIA**

That star, Corry? What's that star?

**49. CLOSE SHOT CORRY**

As he stares at something in the sky.

**CORRY**

That's not a star. That's a ship, Alicia.

**ALICIA**

A ship?

Very slowly there's a ray of light that plays on both their faces and gets brighter and larger. Alicia moves closer to him.

**ALICIA**

There's no ship due here now, Corry. You said not for another three months. You said after the last time it wouldn't be for another—

**CORRY**

(thoughtfully)



It must be Allenby's ship. It's the only one that ever comes close. They stop at other asteroids, then come here. (he looks away again, pensively) That means they'll probably be here in the morning. (another pause) I wonder why.

**ALICIA**

(takes a few steps toward him, concerned)

Corry—what's it mean?

**CORRY**

(turns to her and smiles)

In the morning ... we'll find out. Come on, let's go back to the house.

DISSOLVE TO

**50. EXT. DESERT DAY  
LONG SHOT  
TOP OF DUNES**

Three space-suited figures appear. Allenby's in the foreground. He suddenly stops and looks toward the camera as Corry steps in front of it and into the frame.

**ALLENBY**

Hello, Corry. We wondered where you were.

**CORRY**

You have trouble?

**ALLENBY**

No, we had no trouble.

He motions the others to follow him and they walk down the dune to stand close to Corry.

**ALLENBY**

This is a scheduled stop.

**ADAMS**

We've got good news for you, Corry.

**CORRY**

(looks from face to face)

I'm not interested.

The others exchange looks of surprise.

**ALLENBY**

You better hear what it is.

**CORRY**

You heard me, Allenby. I'm not interested.

**ALLENBY**

You will be. This I guarantee!

Corry takes a few backward steps looking paranoically from one to the other.

**CORRY**

Allenby, give me a break, will you? I don't want trouble.

**ALLENBY**

We don't either.

**ADAMS**

(to one of the others)

He gets worse! If we'd come a month later he'd have been eating sand or something.

Corry now turns and starts to walk away from them, occasionally looking over his shoulder.

**ALLENBY**

(calls out to him)

Corry!

**51. TRACK SHOT**

**CORRY AS HE WALKS**

Faster and faster and is about to break into a dead run.

CUT TO:

**52. LONG SHOT  
OVER CORRY'S SHOULDER  
LOOKING AT ALLENBY**

Who now shouts.



ALLENBY  
Corry!

He runs, crunching on the hard sand, to come up close to Corry. He grabs him, whirls him around.

ALLENBY

It's this way, Corry. All the sentences have been reviewed. They've given you a pardon. We're to take you back home on the ship. But we've got to take off from here in exactly twenty minutes. We can't wait any longer. We've been dodging meteor storms all the way out. We're almost out of fuel. Any longer than twenty minutes we'll have passed the point of departure and then I don't think we'd ever make it.

Corry stares at him and then at the other men who have come down the dune behind him.

### 53. TIGHT CLOSE SHOT Corry

His eyes dart about, going wide as the sense of what's been said to him seeps in. He tries to speak, but for a moment, nothing comes out.

Corry

Wait a minute, Allenby. Wait just a minute.

(he closes his eyes tightly, then opens them)

What did you just say? What did you just say about a—

ALLENBY  
(filling it in)  
A pardon.

ADAMS

(coming up alongside)

But it won't do any of us any

good unless you get your stuff together and get ready to move, Corry. We've picked up seven other men off asteroids and we've only got room for about fifteen pounds of stuff, so you'd better pick up what you need in a hurry and leave the rest of it behind.

(then with a grin, looking off in the direction of the shack)

Such as it is.

Corry

(struggling to keep his voice firm but already it begins to shake with joy and excitement)

Stuff? My stuff? I don't even have fifteen pounds of stuff!

He laughs uproariously, turns, and again starts to walk toward the shack.

### 54. TRACK SHOT ALL OF THEM AS THEY WALK

Corry's voice goes up and down in uncontrollable laughter, a combination of nerves, relief and almost unbearable excitement. The words spew out as he walks.

Corry

I've got a shirt, a pencil and a ledger book. A pair of shoes. (then he throws back his head and laughs again)

The car you can keep here. That'll be for the next poor devil.

ALLENBY  
(evenly)

There won't be any next poor devil. There won't be any more exiles, Corry. This was the last time.

Corry

Good! Wonderful! Thank God for that!

They continue to walk again.

Corry

We'll let it rest here then. The farthest auto graveyard in the universe! And Alicia and I will wave to it as we leave. We'll just look out of a porthole and throw it a kiss goodbye. The car, the shack, the salt lakes, the range. The whole works! Alicia and I will just—

He stops abruptly, suddenly conscious of the silence and the looks.

### 55. PAN SHOT ACROSS THE FACES OF THE OTHER MEN

As they stare at him.

ADAMS

(his eyes narrow)

Who? Who, Corry?

### 56. TIGHT CLOSE SHOT ALLENBY

His eyes close for a moment.

ALLENBY

(sotto)

Oh, my dear God. I forgot her!

### 57. GROUP SHOT

Corry's eyes move around from face to face.

Corry

Allenby—

(and then accusative)

Allenby, it's Alicia—

CARSTAIRS

(whispers under his breath to Adams)

He's out of his mind, isn't he?

ADAMS

Who's Alicia, Corry?

Corry

(laughs uproariously)

Who's Alicia? Adams, you idiot! Who's Alicia! You brought her here in a box! She's a woman—

(and then he stops, looks away for a moment, softly, then looks toward Allenby)

A robot.

(and then once again looks at Allenby)

But closer to a woman. She's kept me alive, Allenby. I swear to you—if it weren't for her—

He looks around again at the circle of silent faces that stare at him.

### 58. CLOSE SHOT Corry

What's the matter? You worried about Alicia?

(he shakes his head)

You needn't be. Alicia's harmless. I tell you she's like a woman. And she's gentle and kind and without her, Allenby, I tell you without her I'd have been finished. I'd have given up.

(a long pause and then very quietly)

You would have only had to come back to bury me!

#### 59. GROUP SHOT

ADAMS

(to Allenby)

That's what you wouldn't let us look at, huh? The crate with the red tag—

CORRY

(to Allenby)

Sorry, Captain, but I had to let it out—

ALLENBY

That's all right, Corry. That's all over with, but unfortunately that's not the problem—

CORRY

(again with a high uncontrollable laugh)

Problem? There aren't any problems! There are no more problems left on heaven or earth! We'll pack up fifteen pounds of stuff and we'll climb in that ship of yours and when we get back to that beautiful green earth—

#### 60. TIGHT CLOSE SHOT CORRY

CORRY

(he whispers it)

Fifteen pounds.

(and then he shouts it)

Fifteen pounds?

(he looks from face to face again)

You've got to have room for more than that. Throw out stuff. Throw out equipment. Alicia weighs more than fifteen pounds.

#### 61. GROUP SHOT

ALLENBY

(quietly)

That's the point, Corry. We're stripped down. We've got room for you and nothing else except that ledger of yours and the pencil.

(he shakes his head)

You'll have to leave the robot here.

CORRY

(shouting)

She's not just a robot, Allenby. You don't understand. You leave her behind—that's murder.

ALLENBY

(shakes his head)

I'm sorry, Corry—I don't have any choice—

CORRY

(backing away, his voice desperate)

No, Allenby. You don't understand. You can't leave her behind.

(and then he screams)

Alicia, come here!

(then he turns to them)

You'll see. You'll see why you can't leave her behind.

(then he shouts again)

Alicia!

#### 62. LONG ANGLE SHOT LOOKING DOWN

As Corry races toward the shack, followed by the others.

CUT ABRUPTLY TO.

#### 63. INT. SHACK

As Corry smashes open the door and races inside only to find the room empty. He stands in the middle of the room looking around, and then over toward the door as Allenby enters followed by the other men.

ALLENBY

Where is she, Corry?

CORRY

I don't know. But when you see her you'll know why you can't leave her behind.

ADAMS

Look, Corry. We just want you to get your gear packed and get out of here.

(he looks at his watch, nervously to Allenby)

We've only got about ten minutes. How about it, Captain?

ALLENBY

(quietly)

Come on, Corry.

CORRY

(backs further into the room)

Not I'm not leaving, Allenby. I told you that I can't leave.

ALLENBY

You don't understand. This is our last trip here. This is anybody's last trip. This is off the route now. That means no

supplies, no nothing. That means if you stay here you die here. And that way, there'd be a day, Corry, when you'd pray for that death to come quicker than it's bargained for—

CORRY

(illogically, half-wildly)

I can't help it, Allenby. I can't leave her behind. And you won't take her. So that means I stay.

(and then looking over his shoulder wildly, he screams)

Alicia! Come here, Alicia! Let them see you. Don't be afraid—

#### 64. CLOSE SHOT ALLENBY

ALLENBY

Corry, listen to me. I saw this ... this thing get crated, shoved into a box.

CORRY

(shakes his head)

I don't care.

ALLENBY

She's a machine, Corry. She's a motor with wires and tubes and batteries.

CORRY

(screaming)

She's a woman!

Allenby wets his lips, bites his lip for a moment standing there unsure, not knowing what to do. Through the window, outside in the yard, we see another member of the crew walk through the yard, pause near the shack.

CREWMAN

Captain? Captain Allenby?

ALLENBY

What?

CREWMAN

Captain, we've got just four minutes left. We've got to take off if we wait longer than that, sir, we'll have moved to a point too far out. I don't think we'll make it, sir!

ADAMS

(his voice frightened)

How about it, Captain Allenby, leave him here!

ALLENBY

We can't leave him here. Sick, mad, or half-alive, we've got to bring him back. Those are the orders.

He takes another step toward

# The Lonely

Corry who backs against the wall.

ALLENBY

Corry, now it isn't just you. Now it's all of us. So that means we can't talk any more and we can't argue with you. We simply just have to take you!

He makes a quick motion with one hand. Adams and Carstairs take a step into the room to flank Allenby and to converge on Corry. Corry, with a kind of animal shout bulls his way past them, pushing Adams out of the way and bolts out of the door.

CUT TO.

## 65. LONG ANGLE SHOT LOOKING DOWN ON THE DESERT

At the figure of Corry as he races, stumbling, falling, picking himself up again. His voice can be heard shouting over and over again.

CORRY  
(shouting)

Alicia! Alicia!

## 66. DIFFERENT ANGLES OF HIM RUNNING

The others in pursuit.

## 67. LONG ANGLE SHOT LOOKING UP TOWARD A DUNE

As he suddenly appears at the top and stares down. CAMERA SWEEPS to the left and down for a shot of Alicia standing alone down in the depression of the sand.

## 68. FULL SHOT THE PLACE CORRY

Alicia!

Behind him Allenby and the others appear. Corry starts toward the girl. Carstairs tackles him, and then Adams pounces on him. They hold him tight as he shouts.

CORRY

Alicia, talk to them. Tell them you're a woman—

Allenby takes a few steps down the dune and stops halfway down. He looks back at Corry.

ALLENBY

I'm sorry, Corry. I don't have any choice.  
(a pause. His voice is quiet)  
I have no choice at all

69. CLOSE SHOT HIS HAND  
As it unbuckles the gun holster on his belt.

## 70. TIGHT CLOSE SHOT CORRY

His eyes go wide.

CORRY  
(screams)

No, Allenby! Not She's a human being!

## 71. FLASH SHOT BEHIND ALICIA

Looking straight up at the dune at Allenby, who takes the gun out and fires directly into her face.

## 73. ANGLE SHOT LOOKING UP TOWARD THE BACK OF ALICIA

As very slowly she crumples to the sand, blotting out the camera momentarily.

## 74. CLOSE SHOT CORRY

His fingers convulsively move away from his face and fall to his side. He takes three slow steps down the dune toward the crumpled figure. Then he looks down. PAN SHOT with his eyes to a close shot of Alicia's hand clenched tightly. A faint PAN shot across her arm and shoulder to the back of her head. Then a very SLOW PAN shot two or three feet across the ground to a shot of the remnants of a broken machine, twisted and bent wires, a cracked eye, a couple of fragments of plastic, all the remains of a face.

## 75. GROUP SHOT THE MEN

With Corry in the foreground. A few feet behind him is Allenby, and then on the dune are the others. Crewman comes into the frame in the background.

CREWMAN

It's got to be now, Captain  
Allenby!

ALLENBY

(nods, softly)

It will be now!

(then he turns to Corry)

Come on, Corry. It's time to go home.

Now numbly, without direction. Corry allows himself to be led up the dune and across the desert.

## 76. LONG ANGLE SHOT LOOKING DOWN ON THEM

As they walk. The light from the ship gets brighter and brighter as they approach it.

## 77. CLOSE GROUP SHOT AS THEY PAUSE

For a moment. Corry looks back at the crumpled figure in the distance, then again turns and begins to walk.

## 78. TRACK SHOT WITH THEM

As their feet crunch on the sand, past the shed, the car and all the rest of it.

ALLENBY

(alongside Corry)

It's all behind you now, Corry.

All behind you. Like a bad dream. A nightmare ... and when you wake up you'll be on earth. You'll be home.

CORRY

Home?

ALLENBY

That's right.

(a long pause, putting his hand on Corry's arm)

All you're leaving behind.

Corry, is loneliness.

## 79. TIGHT CLOSE SHOT CORY'S FACE

As the tears roll down his cheeks. His eyes move down to the sand by his feet and for a moment his face is impassive and immobile. He nods slowly.

CORRY

I must remember to ... I must remember to keep that in mind!

Then he turns to walk ahead of the others.

## 80. LONG ANGLE SHOT LOOKING DOWN AT THE LITTLE GROUP OF MEN

As they pass the shack and then move away into the night toward the distant light that flickers on them, beckons them away. The CAMERA PANS them and up into the starry night sky.

NARRATOR'S VOICE

Down below, on a microscopic piece of sand that floats through space, is a fragment of a man's life. Left to rust is the place he lived in and the machines he used. Without use they will disintegrate from the wind and the sand and the years that act upon them. All of Mr. Corry's machines ... including the one made in his image, kept alive by love, but now ... obsolete ... in the Twilight Zone!

A SLOW FADE TO BLACK.

THE END 17

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## L O O K I N G A H E A D

## In the August TZ . . .

## Lovecraft speaks!

H.P. Lovecraft, that titan of American horror, may have died in 1937, but that hasn't stopped him from talking to TZ about everything from ghost stories (atmosphere, he says, is everything) to premarital sex (not worth the effort) to the American Revolution (he's against it). Meet a totally unique man with some highly unpopular views—In a most unusual TZ interview.

## Our furry friends.

Lovecraft liked cats better than just about anything—better than humans, at any rate—and so, in HPL's honor, our August issue includes a special section on *Felis domestica*, including a classic horror tale, a Feline Miscellany, and Lovecraft's own magnificent defense of the breed, "Something About Cats."

## Checking in with Donald Sutherland.

Long before the rangy Canadian was giving people artificial hearts in this year's medical thriller *Threshold*, he was stumbling through Venice in one of the greatest horror movies ever made, *Don't Look Now*. And long before that he was polishing up his act in films like *Die, Die, My Darling* and *Dr. Terror's House of Horrors*. He recalls those days in a talk with TZ's James Verniere.

## TZ—The Movie.

You'll find expanded coverage of Steven Spielberg's *The Twilight Zone* in August's TZ, with an exclusive full-color preview and an inside look at the production.

## Vintage Serling.

August's *Twilight Zone* script: the haunting "Five Characters in Search of an Exit."

## The bizarre . . . and beyond.

August's fiction lineup takes you back to spectre-haunted Japan, to the electronic wizardry of modern-day California, to the not-so-comic world of the comic strips, and to some places only glimpsed in dreams.

## Plus . . .

A talk with Academy Award-winner Cliff Robertson about the classic film *Charly*, his tv work with Rod Serling, and his forthcoming film, *Brainstorm*, with the late Natalie Wood . . . an entertaining new quiz about show-biz fantasy . . . provocative columns by Thomas M. Disch, Ron Goulart, and Gahan Wilson . . . and further Show-by-Show listings for *The Twilight Zone*'s final season.

**Don't miss August's *Twilight Zone*—two months of entertainment for just \$2.50**